

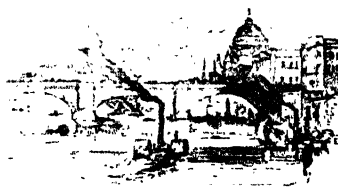
THE
TRACT MAGAZINE,

AND

Christian Miscellany:

CONTAINING

VARIOUS PIECES OF PERMANENT INTEREST.



1854.

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THE
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AND
CHRISTIAN MISCELLANY



NEW-YEAR'S EVE; OR, THE LAST SIXPENCE.

“FATHER, you say God loves us.”

“Yes, dear child; surely God does love us. He loves all his creatures, Naomi; and if we are his children,—his own,—by believing in the Saviour, he loves us with a peculiar love. But why do you speak of this now?”

The weeping child—she was but a child—looked around, and then covering her pale, worn, but intelligent countenance with her little hands, and bowing her head till face and hands were pressed close to the coverlid of her father's bed, she sobbed and moaned as though her heart must break.

Haggard and flushed with fever, the father sat in bed, propped with pillows and wrapped in a faded cloak. Before

JANUARY, 1854.

A

him, and in his thin weak hands, were the tools of his trade. He was a wood-engraver.

"You say that God loves us, father," the child at length repeated, retaining her posture unmoved. "Does he really love us?"

"Naomi dear!"

"Father," sobbed the young one, raising her head, and meeting the sick man's earnest glance, "it is gone, all but sixpence—that last money—and we have no food. If God loves us, will he let us starve—starve?"

"Perhaps even so, Naomi; but that will be no proof that he does not love us."

"I don't understand this, father; I cannot understand it," said Naomi, passionately. "What! love us, and let us—"

"Stop, my poor, poor child, my last and only one; do not distrust his mercy and goodness, his wisdom and power. Let us say, 'Though he slay us, yet will we trust in him;' in him, Naomi, who knows what is best for us, and who bids us trust in himself at all times—yes, at all times, Naomi."

The child made no answer; she only took her father's hand, and pressed it, and then again bowed her head in mute sorrow.

"'Like as a father pitieth his children,' my own Naomi, 'so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.' We must not forget him: he has not forgotten us. He is our Father."

Naomi again lifted her head, and glanced around their miserable chamber. There might be reproach in that look; but still she did not speak. Poor child! she had suffered much, and a horror of thick darkness was upon her.

It was a poor room, scantily furnished. From its single dim window you might have looked low down upon a dark London court, with its usual accompaniments of poverty and vice and ignorance; and seeming more wretched from the rain which pattered down, and the black mud under foot, and the shivering aspect of every living thing. It was winter.

"Reach the Bible, Naomi, dear. I can get on better while you read, I think; but first shift this pillow a little. I must get nearer the light if I can. It is very dark to-day."

The child turned to the bed-head, and moved the pillow.

"Will that do, father?"

"Yes, nicely. Now read."

"Where shall I read?"

"Anywhere: we cannot open that book at a wrong place. Stay; read the sixth of Matthew, the last part."

"I read that yesterday, father; we have read it very often of late," said Naomi.

"I would like you to read it again, dear; we cannot read it too often. I want you to believe all that the Saviour, our merciful, loving Jesus, says there."

"Father, do you believe this—all of it? every word of it?" asked the child suddenly, when she had got to the end of the chapter.

The father was silent for a few moments: his lips moved. You might have read in their troubled, voiceless motion, a prayer for faith, stronger faith—a gasping for it from a burdened, tried, and tempted soul. "Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief."

"Every word of it, father?"

"Yes, every word, Naomi: I believe it; I know it must be true, and much besides that I cannot tightly grasp. Why do you ask me so closely—so very closely?"

"I won't father, if it distresses you. I do not know why I asked," sobbed the child. "I was thinking if Jesus were to know—do you think he does know that, father?—that there is only sixpence left, and no food, nothing to eat, and you ill, so ill, dear father!" Tears ran down her cheeks, and her voice sank to a troubled whisper. "Yes, he knows you are ill, father; he sees that, and he knows how poor we are, because he knows everything: but, it is the last sixpence—and—and nothing to eat, and nothing for to-morrow, father, and you so ill!"

"Naomi, dear, these are the trials that are intended to lead us to Jesus. You know what is said of him, 'We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are.'"

All this time the sick man was labouring painfully at his task; light labour it might be thought, and pleasant occupation to one in health and free from every anxious care; but not light to him. For weeks he had been on that sick-bed, and his means were nearly all exhausted. He had no nurse but his child, Naomi; and at length, with watching, and weariness, and hard fare, and anxiety, and disappointment, and sad foreboding, the faith of father and child had become weak.

The impoverished engraver had never been rich; but not many years had elapsed since many comforts had surrounded him and his, and he had bright hopes of the future. These hopes had faded away. Sickness and death, sickness and death, sickness and death—thrice the stroke descended. A child first—a hopeful boy; the mother next; then another child,

Naomi's sister; and the widowed father and motherless girl only remained.

Another stroke : he became security for a brother, and the security was enforced.

Another : a firm with whom the wood-engraver found employment failed while in his debt, and he lost the greater part of his earnings.

Then he broke up his home, once so happy, then so desolate ; sold the greater part of his furniture and his library to pay his own debts, and removed with the rest to two small rooms in an old house in a city court, which had formerly been his office and workroom ; and there for two years the father and child had lived, and struggled, and fought with poverty. For the art had become less remunerative to him. Competitors had crowded in, and employment was precarious. .

Then came sickness again—a slow, consuming, nervous disease. We have told the rest, except that during the progress of his illness the poor artist, propped in his bed, as we have seen, had wrought now and then, and earned a few scanty shillings, when mind and body should both have been at rest.

"But, father," said Naomi, "what shall we do when this money is gone? You said we might starve!"

Again the father lifted up his heart in fervent prayer, and then said, more cheerfully, "I do not fear that God will let us starve; oh, no. If we are perplexed, we need not be in despair. Go, my girl, and spend that last sixpence; get a small loaf and a little milk; and while you are gone I will consider what is to be done. You had better make up the fire, Naomi, before you go. There are coals, are there not?"

Yes, there were a few coals; that was a comfort; and Naomi, wrapping around her a shawl, and putting on her bonnet, descended the steep stairs, and was soon in the street. She had not far to go for the scanty supplies, and she was quick in performing her errand; but she had not taken many steps on the sloppy pavement before other feet were on the stairs, and approaching the door of the poor engraver. There was a hurried tap at the door; a "Come in" from the invalid; and, passing through the outer room, a lad, in obedience to a second summons, entered the chamber.

"I am come for the blocks for Mr. H.," he said, somewhat pertly. "I am sorry to disturb you, sir," he added, more respectfully; "don't rise: if you will allow me, I can reach them."

"They are not finished," said the artist, mildly and sadly.

"I hoped to have them ready to-day; but I am very weak still, and unable to work long at a time. They will be ready, I trust, to-morrow." The tones of the sick man corroborated his statement.

"I am sorry," replied the lad; "it is very inconvenient: the blocks are wanted for the printer directly; and Mr. H. is in a fidget about them."

"I am sorry too," rejoined the invalid. "I did not know they were wanted immediately, or I would have endeavoured—"

"Mr. H. has altered his plans, and wants to push the printing forward," said the youth.

"I wish I had known it earlier; but I will make all the haste I can. There are one or two already finished."

"But," continued the lad, looking embarrassed, "Mr. H. says he must have them to-day; and if not finished, I was to take them as they are. I am very sorry, sir; but I must obey orders, you know."

"And Mr. H. knows how very ill I have been, and how feeble I am still?"

"Yes, I think he does," replied the youth. "I told him you were ill; but perhaps he did not remember it."

During this conversation Naomi had quietly entered, and stood by her father's bedside, glancing with a troubled eye at the young visitor.

"Reach them, Naomi," said her father.

"All, father?" And when the youth turned at the sound of her voice, he saw tears on her pallid cheeks.

* * * *

"All here but Archie; I wish he would come."

It was new-year's eve; and there was a juvenile party in a neat, quiet, and respectable street. Not altogether a juvenile party either, for uncles and aunts and older cousins were present also; but they were in a room by themselves—the drawing-room in front, on the first floor; and the younger cousins had a room to themselves, the sitting-room behind, opening upon the drawing-room with folding-doors, which that evening were kept swinging pretty frequently on their hinges. Now shut close, when there was too much noisy fun in the back room to permit the elders to carry on their more quiet intercourse uninterruptedly; and now open, for them just to see how the young people were getting on, and possibly to witness, if not to share in, their games. Bright fires blazed cheerfully in the drawing-room and the sitting-room; and there was a

certain side-table, which looked tempting, and showed sufficient tokens that all the good things had not departed with Christmas.

It was a family meeting. There are many such in London, as elsewhere, when men of business lay aside their cares, and matrons forget their household perplexities, and think of the days when they were young, and call up memories which, through a whole year, may have slumbered. These are pleasant reunions, and not always profitless; not profitless, if they rivet more firmly the bonds of family affection, and keep alive the seeds of family intercourse.

"All here but Archie," was shouted in the smaller room; "and we shall not get on half so well without him, he is always so full of fun. I wonder what makes him so late."

"Archie is a man of business now," said his sister, rather derisively—she was a year or two younger than he: "he comes home of an evening, so full of serious importance, that it is quite wonderful. For my part, I should not wonder at his forsaking us altogether to-night, and getting in with the grave old folks in the drawing-room. He does not like to be thought a boy, I can tell you."

"Nonsense, Mary; we won't let him desert us to-night at any rate; and here he is to answer for himself."

"For what have I to answer, my little cousin?" asked the youth, stepping forward.

"For desertion, Archie. Mary tells us you are too proud—"

"I did not say that, Ellen."

"Too big, then, to play with children. What do you say?"

"That I mean to be a boy to-night, cousin. To-morrow begins a new year."

"But what made you so late, Archie? We thought you would be here an hour ago," said his sister.

"So I should have been," he answered, gloomily, "if it had not been for a stupid affair about some silly pictures. But never mind; I am here now."

In spite, however, of Archie's determination to be a boy for that night only, he did not altogether succeed: there was something on his mind he could not shake off.

"What is the matter with you, Archie? What are you thinking about that makes you so grave?" asked one of his cousins later in the evening.

"You will be jealous, Emmy, if I tell you."

"Jealous! not she, indeed!"

"I was thinking about a pretty little face I saw to-day."

"Oh, Archie, is that all?"

"No, not quite: there is something I am thinking about more."

"Tell us all about it, Archie."

And Archie told how he had that day been sent by his employer, Mr. H—, the publisher, in such a street, to a poor wood-engraver, who lived high up in an old house, in a small court; that he went into the room where this poor engraver was sick in bed—very weak, and thin, and pale; that he was sitting up, wrapped in an old cloak, at work, but his hands trembled very much. He told what passed, and how he was obliged to take away all the blocks that were untouched or unfinished, and how meekly the sick man bore the disappointment and the insult. "If he had been angry with me," said the lad, "I should not have minded it half so much."

Then he went on to say that, while he was in the room, the wood-engraver's little daughter came in. He had seen her before, when he had been sent there on business; and sometimes he had seen her at his employer's; but till that day he had not particularly noticed her, but that then he did; she had just come out of the rain, and she was shivering with cold, he could see; but besides that, she looked so wan, and careworn, and sorrowful. Then he told how her eyes filled with tears when she had to put up the blocks for him; and how fondly she looked at her poor sick father through her tears; and that he was sure then that they were in trouble, to say nothing of the poor engraver being ill.

"And that was not all," said Archie. "When I was talking to the man, close by the bedside was a little table, and a Bible was open upon it, and a chair close by, as if the girl had been reading, and I was curious to find out what she had read; so I looked and looked, and I found out that and something else too; the page was wet—wet. It was not with rain, Emmy. The little girl had been crying over the Bible." And then as he was leaving, and in passing through the outer room, Archie said he saw a little jug with sky-blue milk, and a small loaf, which was not there when he went in. The girl had been to fetch these, no doubt; and if that was not all the dinner they were likely to have, and supper too, he was very much mistaken, that was all.

"O Archie, I wish you had not told us about this," said another cousin; "it will only make us dull all the rest of the

evening, and there will not be any use in that. We cannot help it, you know. There are plenty of people in London who are in trouble of one sort or another." And that was true, no doubt.

So they forgot Archie's story presently, as well as they could, at least ; and when the oranges, and nuts, and apples, and pears, and cake, and wine were put on the table, were there any in that party whose thoughts wandered to Naomi and her sick father ? Yes, there was one.

There was a tall, elderly gentleman, with hair as white as silver, who was a guest that new year's eve at this family party. He was a German by birth, though the greater part of his life had been spent in England ; he spelt his name Schmidt, but was known in plain English, and in that family, as Uncle Smith, and he was uncle to one of the ladies there assembled. He was looked upon as an odd man, this Anglo-German gentleman ; but very good and kind nevertheless. He was not rich certainly ; but he was not exactly a poor relation. He was an old bachelor, and lived with his niece, who was a widow, and her little daughter, in a small cottage. He was not an idle man—nobody could accuse him of that ; and he had been in business a good many years ago : but now he was out of business, and what he found to do to employ or amuse himself was best known to himself, perhaps ; but that he walked a good many miles in the day, and had always some important matter in hand, was no secret, though his important matters often were secrets. He was not a humourist—he was too grave for that ; nor a misanthrope—he was too cheerful for that ; nor a fussy old gentleman—he was too quiet by half for that ; and so he was just simple Uncle Smith.

Archie was leaving his home the next morning for his early walk into the city, when straight before him was a gentleman with wavy white hair falling over his coat-collar, almost to his shoulders ; and by that token Archie knew Mr. Schmidt without looking at his face.

" A happy new year, uncle," said the boy, as he overtook the old gentleman.

" The same to you, Archie. Take my arm. I am going into the city."

" I must walk fast, sir," said Archie.

" As fast as you like : my legs are longer than yours, and it will be hard if I cannot keep up with you. I want to hear what this story is you were telling last night about a poor engraver and his daughter. It quite touched the heart of my

little grand-niece: she could not sleep for thinking about it."

"Oh, uncle, it is nothing out of the common way."

"I dare say not, Archie; but I should like to hear it, nevertheless."

It was rather troublesome, Archie thought, to have to tell a story twice over; and, in fact, he had almost slept off the impression that had been made on his mind by the scene of yesterday: but he repeated the story.

"Thank you, Archie. Shall you be passing the court you speak of?"

It would not be far out of the way, the boy said. And having ascertained this, Uncle Smith began to talk of other matters.

* * * * *

The poor artist had risen from his bed, and was completely dressed; but he was very feeble, and as he slowly walked across the room, with the aid of a stick, his legs could scarcely support even his light weight. Naomi was there, standing by him, waiting and wondering; her father had not been out of his room since late in the summer; and she had done all his errands, had taken notes and messages, and sometimes parcels, to his employers; and had been huffed, and pushed aside, and made to wait, as such messengers are sometimes in busy booksellers' shops, as well as in others. Naomi was used to this, and did not much mind it, for "use is second nature" sometimes. But she wondered now why her father should be exposing himself to the cold and damp when he was not fit to leave his bed, much more his room.

"Father, cannot I go for you? I will go anywhere for you," she said, timidly.

Timidly, for her father was then bending over a small cabinet, and big tears were gathering fast in his eyes. It is painful to see a strong-minded man weep. A few relics of departed joys were before him—ornaments which for many, many days had not seen the light, mementos of affection: these were a simple slight gold chain, a locket, a silver-mounted coral, a child's coral and bells, a brooch, and a wedding-ring.

"Father, dear father, what are you going to do with them?" And Naomi twined her slender arms around her father's neck, and sobbed aloud.

There was a gentle tap at the outer door, and a slight rustling as of some one entering unbidden, and then Naomi remembered that she had left the door partly open. She

hastened to the outer room, and returned with a venerable gentleman with wavy white hair, falling almost to his shoulders.

"My dear brother!" said the visitor; and, oh, how the kind tone sank into the sick man's soul!

"Brother! You are mistaken, sir; I have no brother," he said, mournfully.

"Think again, my suffering brother. 'One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.'"

The poor artist had no need to leave his room that day on his contemplated errand; and, cheered by the sympathy of his Christian brother, faith and hope revived. Health gradually returned, too; and, before he himself could seek it, fresh employment reached him through the agency of Mr. Schmidt. Soon there were many sixpences in the little purse of his young housekeeper.

And then, humbled to think of her unbelief, Naomi learned to trust in her heavenly Father's care and love. Bright days have dawned upon her since then, as well as some cloudy and dark ones; but in the darkest a beam of heavenly light has pointed to the encouragements and promises which once awakened her childish doubts, but "every word" of which she now believes with a firm and steadfast faith. "He is faithful that promised."

We shall not write any more; our simple story is already too long, perhaps. Only this let us say: in city, town, village, and hamlet—in busy scenes of daily strivings for bread—and in the lonelier retirements of pain and sorrow—are to be found, if we would seek them, even on this new year's day, and any day in the year besides, the cast down and tempted, the sick and the suffering, the afflicted and the needy, of the one great family of which you, more prosperous believer, form a part. And while you bless your God and Saviour for mercies innumerable, past, present, and to come, will you not remember that of such as we have spoken are the words recorded, "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren?"

G. E. S.

NOT LOST, BUT GONE BEFORE.

"I HOPE I find you more cheerful this morning, my friend," said the pastor, as he entered the apartment of one of his flock—a lady who had been much tried in the school of affliction.

"I fear not, dear sir," she replied. "Had my sore bereavement taken place more gradually, I could have borne it

better ; but it was so sudden, so unexpected, that my mind was overwhelmed."

" My poor friend, you know how deeply I feel for you ; but would ask, why was this ? or why should any trial be unexpected to one of the Lord's people ? Has he not warned us beforehand that the world through which we are journeying is but a desert ? And if his hand strip it a little bare of those flowers over which our hearts had been hanging, surely we ought not to say he has surprised us, or has been doing some strange thing. Dear sister, your Lord never promised you exemption from the trials of life when he graciously called you to follow him."

" Certainly not, sir."

" No, my friend. The children of Israel ought to have known, ere they left Egypt, that it was into a wilderness they were to go before they could reach the goodly mountain and Lebanon. And though our fond hearts would fain have it otherwise, our course through this world is a wilderness still."

" Truly so to me now, Mr. L—," the lady answered, " for I may say with Jonah that my pleasant gourd is withered."

" And does not the Lord say to you, my sister, as he said to Jonah, ' Doest thou well to be angry ? ' Oh, let me remind you that if he saw fit to remove the beautiful plant in whose shadow you delighted—if he have thus made you to feel that the desert through which you are passing is, indeed, barren and dry, he has promised that he will himself be ' as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest ; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land,' " Isa. xxxii. 2.

" I know it, Mr. L— ; and I do try in this hour of sorrow to fly to Him who is ' a refuge from the storm, and a shadow from the heat,' Isa. xxv. 4. Still a constant sense of my bereavement makes me desolate and wretched."

" Another source of consolation to which I would direct your mind," said the pastor, " is, that those you weep for have fallen asleep in Jesus ; so that you may reckon upon a reunion with them before long, and need not sorrow as others who have no hope. I conceive this to be a legitimate, a scriptural source of comfort. Tell me, then, do your thoughts dwell more upon the world your beloved ones are gone to, than upon the world they have left ? Do you try to realize to your mind their present blessedness and future glory, all which you hope to enjoy with them ? Do you use these means, among others, of setting ' your affection on things above ? '"

"I am not sure, Mr. L—. I believe I sometimes do; but I own I am not comforted."

"You are not sure! dear friend," said the pastor. He was silent for a while; and then, as if to turn her thoughts into another channel, he added: "This is a fine morning. The whole face of nature is bright and cheerful. I witnessed a striking scene as I came along by the sea-shore. There was at anchor in the harbour a fine vessel, which arrived yesterday from Australia, one that has, at different times, taken out emigrants to that country. As I reached the landing-place some of her crew had just come on shore, and the quay was crowded with friends and relatives of those who had gone to that distant land. The sailors and passengers just arrived were beset with inquiries; and as I lingered for a while on the spot, it happened that I was present at the delivery of several messages and letters. There were some receiving such whose looks betokened disappointment or grief; but it was pleasanter to turn my attention to those who seemed to illustrate the truth of the proverb, 'As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country,' Prov. xxv. 25. 'Your father is well and happy, my children,' cried a woman, who was followed by four or five boys and girls, all with countenances expressive of extreme anxiety. 'He says it is a fine country, and we are to go to him. He cannot tell how soon; but he tells us to be ready. So what signify a few little trials before we set out? We shall all be happy together when once we get there.' And very happy they seemed already in anticipation, as they walked away.

"A fine young man, who looked, nevertheless, as if he were well acquainted with distress, gazed earnestly around, until his eyes rested upon one of the sailors of the newly-arrived vessel. After a cordial greeting, the sailor handed him a packet, saying, 'Take this, and you will find that all your troubles are over. Your brothers are prospering, and send you the means of going to them at once. They have a situation for you engaged, that will suit you in every way.' Oh! how the pale cheek of the young man flushed! how his eye sparkled while he read his brothers' communication! 'So you are really going,' said a friend who stood near. 'Won't you be sorry to leave your native home?' 'Sorry,' he exclaimed, 'to leave all my troubles, and to go where those I love are gone before me! How should I be sorry?'

"But what touched me most of all was the case of an old woman, bent with years and infirmities, who, amidst all the

bustle, sat upon a bench, silently watching the busy scene, evidently expecting some news, but by fear and feebleness prevented from inquiring. At last a man, who had just landed, saw her and approached. 'Glad to see you again, Mrs. Brown,' said he. 'Your son sends you this, with his dutiful love, and bade me tell you that you would not have objected to his going away, if you had known what a fine country he is in, and how well and happy he is.' Never did I before witness so great and sudden a transformation as joy made in the appearance of this poor old creature. The withered features seemed to expand under its influence, and the shaking frame to move with more energy, as she wrung the hand of the person who brought the good tidings. 'Are you sure, quite sure, sir, that my Richard is well? And he is rich and happy too! That is enough for his old mother. I never ought to have grieved at his leaving me, when it was so much for his good.'

The lady listened with an appearance of interest while the minister related these little anecdotes. "Poor people!" she said; "it is pleasant to hear of their being reconciled to the absence of their friends by knowing of their welfare."

"And tell me, my dear madam," the pastor replied, "shall the children of this world be wiser, shall they be more unselfish in their generation than the children of light? Why are these people comforted for the loss of their beloved ones by knowing that they are happy? while you, who have reason to believe that those whom you lament are in possession of a far greater and an abiding happiness, refuse to be comforted?"

The lady seemed struck by this question. "It does, it does seem strange, sir," she replied. "Perhaps you, who know so much of our deceitful nature, can tell me why it is so."

"I do think, my friend," he answered, "that unbelief—harsh as the expression may sound—unbelief is the cause of it. The poor people I have told you of had not the slightest doubt that the good news which reached them from a far country was true. They could realize to their minds all that they heard; and when doing so, to continue their regrets would have been not only selfish, but foolish. Did our minds dwell more upon the joys which are laid up for those who love God—did we habitually enjoy the contemplation of them—I am convinced that when our Christian friends are called away, we should no longer mourn even as others who have no hope. Would it not comfort the bereaved heart to think that one after another had ended the journey across this desert

all danger being past of stumbling by the way, or soiling the fair garment of their Christian profession? There truly is comfort in the thought, for every day of life here multiplies these dangers of the journey, and thickens the darkness of the atmosphere. False, fleshly religiousness seems unceasingly offering its deceits; and other confidences than Jesus are putting forth their claims to the wretched heart of man. All is threatening to make the road more slippery and dark. Should not, then, the thought of so many of the Lord's elect being safely laid up with him in hope of the resurrection be grateful and welcome to the heart?"

"It should, Mr. L—; and I have been less wise and disinterested than the poor people of whom you were telling me. They were not, at least all of them, hoping to follow their friends to the good land, as I, through grace, expect to do. It is, indeed, a consoling thought; and I pray God to aid me, by the Holy Spirit, that I may dwell upon it with more faith for the future."

"Do, my friend; but never let the sweet hope of reunion with those who are gone before, nor any other joyous prospect in the 'purchased possession,' turn your mind from that anticipation which surpasses them all in glory. You will see Jesus, who died for your sins, and rose again for your justification. You will see him as he is, and thus be made like unto him, 1 John iii. 2, perfectly sanctified, and free from every stain of sin. With such an object full in view, your resting, satisfied eye may safely gaze, even through the mists of this gloomy atmosphere, upon 'the bright fields beyond the flood,' and their various sources of enjoyment; remembering with comfort, concerning those gone before, that, as Wesley says,—

"One family we dwell on earth,
One church above, beneath;
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.

"One army of the living God,
To his command we bow;
Part of the host have cross'd the flood,
And part are crossing now."

E. F. G.

THE TWO VOYAGES.

MANY travellers become impressed with the idea that they owe a duty to society to narrate their adventures and their

experience in scenes which others may subsequently traverse; and I desire not to be behind such philanthropists in the performance of the task. I have twice been called to go down to the sea in ships; and, though it was before steam paddled through the waves, defied the winds, and puffed at distance, yet the very different terminations of my voyages may afford a few hints to future passengers in their choice of ships and captains. Unfortunately, I am not sufficiently initiated into the technicalities of navigation to describe as a sailor would the management of a ship; but to the best of an ignorant landsman's ability I venture to narrate the circumstances which occurred.

I was returning from the west to my home and family in Britain. The ship had been pronounced "seaworthy," my fellow-passengers were agreeable, and the "homeward bound" were able to smile even at sea-sickness—after it was over, of course, I mean.

It was not until that time arrived, and I was able to walk the deck with something of the nautical roll necessary to preserve the dignity of the perpendicular, that I particularly observed our captain; and what I observed did not prepossess me in his favour. His conceit and self-sufficiency exceeded anything describable. It was his ship, his voyage, his skill, his weather, and, judging from his conversation, he might have received charge over sky and ocean with his bills of lading. "I know these seas so well," said he, "that I carry sail through storms that many dare not face. But you see," and he smiled complacently, "I'm not born to be drowned."

"Do you judge so because it has not happened yet?" I asked. "You forget that the wisest of us knows not what shall be on the morrow."

"I can give a pretty good guess, however," he replied, "and I've never been mistaken yet. We weathered a storm last voyage that made the stoutest heart among my crew tremble, and none of them expected to see the morning. Ay, that was worth calling a storm. We tossed like a cockleshell on the grandest waves I ever saw, and they seemed resolved to dash us to pieces in their fury; yet here we are every man of us! It must blow a gale such as I've never heard of yet that hinders me from making port, I believe."

"But I have heard," persisted I, "that mariners' dangers are not limited to storms. There are hidden rocks on which the ship may strike in calm and sunshine."

"Not when a man knows what he is about, sir, which I

think I do," returned the captain, eyeing me with much contempt.

"It would not astonish me if you struck on some rock that is down in your chart," thought I, "to say nothing of any yet undiscovered. 'Pride goeth before destruction' at sea sometimes as well as on shore."

At length the faint outlines of some headlands of our native coast were enthusiastically hailed, and thoughts of home and friendly greetings began to emerge from the mists of apprehension and uncertainty, though the wind had been increasing for some hours, and the sea looked as if it had some designs of mischief yet in view.

"Shall you anchor off — Point, captain?" asked a passenger.

"I mean to be in dock with the morning tide," was the captain's brief reply.

"I thought, perhaps, you would telegraph for a pilot," returned the passenger.

"I am my own pilot, sir;" and the captain whistled contemptuously.

"He's in one of his daring humours, and I'll bet anything you like that he takes the narrow channel," quietly remarked a sailor as he passed us to execute some order.

"Is it dangerous?" asked the same passenger, uneasily.

"Very, in a gale, and there's one coming, or I'm no sailor," replied the man; "but if any man can do it, it's himself—only he might boast once too often, you know."

Evening came, and the gale was becoming what the sailors called "pretty stiff," when the mate touched my arm, rousing me from a pleasant reverie, in which smiling welcome home held prominent place.

"We are going in by the narrow channel, sir," said he; "and, with this wind increasing, we may be dashed to pieces on the sand-bank. It is foolhardiness, to say the least. Cannot you passengers compel him to take the safer course?"

I felt alarmed, and hastily communicated with two or three gentlemen, and, proceeding together to the captain, we respectfully urged our wishes, and promised to represent any delay caused by the alteration of his course as a condescension to our anxious apprehensions.

But, as I anticipated, he was immovable. "We shall be in dock to-morrow morning, gentlemen," said he. "There is no danger whatever. Go to sleep as usual, and I'll engage to awake you with a land salute." Then he laughed at our

cowardice, took offence at our presumption, and finally swore that he would do as he chose ; that his life was as valuable as ours, and he would not be dictated to by a set of cowardly landmen.

We retired, but not to rest, and in half an hour the mate again approached, saying, " We are in for it now ; and if the gale increases, we shall have work to do that we did not expect."

Night advanced, cold and cheerless. The few who were apprehensive of danger remained on deck, holding on by the ropes to keep ourselves from being washed overboard. The captain came up, equipped for night duty ; and his hoarse shout in the issue of commands was with difficulty heard in the wild confusion of the elements ; but he stood calm and self-possessed, sometimes sneering at our folly, and apparently enjoying himself extremely, surrounded by flapping sails, straining timbers, and the ceaseless roar of winds and waves. We wished we were able to sympathize in such amusement ; but we supposed it must be peculiar to himself, and endeavoured to take courage from his fearless demeanour. But presently there arose a cry of " Breakers a-head !" The captain flew to the wheel—the sails were struck ; but the winds had the mastery now, and the captain found a will that could defy his own.

" Boats, make ready !" was the next hurried cry ; but, as too often occurs in the moment of danger, the ropes and chains were so entangled, that some delay followed the attempt to lower them, and in the mean time we were hurrying on to destruction. The passengers from below came rushing on deck in terror, amidst crashing masts and entangled rigging ; and then came the thrilling shock, which gave warning that we had touched the bank ; and the next was the fatal plunge that struck the foreship deep into the sand, and left us to be shattered there at the wild waves' pleasure.

It is needless to dwell upon the terrors of that fearful night. I was among the few who contrived to manage the only boat which survived ; and scarcely had I landed with the morning light, surrounded by bodies of the dead and fragments of the wreck borne up by the rising tide, ere I recognised the lifeless body of our wilful, self-confident captain.

He was like those who, on the voyage of life, refuse counsel and despise instruction ; who practically recognise no will but their own ; who are wise in their own conceits, and satisfied with their own judgment, and trust in their own hearts, and, if left

to be filled with their own ways, must finally make frightful shipwreck just when they suppose themselves sure of port. And as this mistaken man was accompanied into eternity by those whose lives he had endangered and destroyed, so no man lives or dies unto himself, but bears with him, when all self-deception ends, the aggravated guilt of others' ruin through the influence of his evil precept and example.

Two years afterwards I was at sea again. I joined the ship at Madeira; and, while I admired her stately proportions, and rejoiced in her swelling sails, I cannot deny that it was with some anxiety I commenced my observations of the captain. He was apparently approaching middle age; and an expression of care and toil marked his countenance. He seemed to take no rest; but, glass in hand and chart on deck, he watched by day and night. I found that he was not originally the appointed commander of the vessel; but, in consequence of the death of the late captain, had assumed the post of honour and responsibility, and so far had ably discharged his duty. But I knew too well that open sea and fair weather afford no great proof of a navigator's skill; and as we neared home I began to feel anxious about the course he would pursue.

When — Point was visible, I therefore ventured to ask him: "Well, captain, do you mean to try the narrow channel?"

"Neither of them, sir," he replied. "I shall telegraph for a pilot, and anchor till he comes."

"Then you do not feel sufficiently acquainted with the coast, I presume."

"I think it better to avoid the risk of failure, by accepting the means of safety. My charge is too valuable, and the consequences of a mistake would be too fatal, for me to try experiments on the voyage home."

"You are a wise man," thought I, as I listened to the musical sound of the sailors' voices as they dropped the anchor, and I went thankfully and peacefully to rest.

At daybreak I rose in time to see a boat run alongside our ship, from which the pilot sprang on deck. The captain welcomed him with a hearty greeting: "Thank God," said he; "my work is done." And I observed that, after he had indulged in a sound sleep (the first he had enjoyed for weeks), the anxious expression cleared away from his brow, and the perfect relief of his mind was manifested in the easy flow of conversation as we paced the deck together.

In the mean time, under the pilot's guidance, the beautiful ship cleared every danger, and our progress was rapid and joyous. It was impossible to avoid contrasting the results of my two voyages under conduct so entirely different; and, suddenly pausing in our walk, as a long, loud cheer proclaimed the city in sight, I addressed my companion.

"Forgive a stranger's freedom," I said; "but I feel encouraged to ask whether you have done with yourself as you did this morning with your ship—whether you have committed yourself with all your hopes for the eternal world into the hands of the great Pilot of God's people?"

The captain's countenance beamed with peace and pleasure as he replied: "I rejoice to tell you that, by God's grace, I have. For years I took my own course, sought happiness in my own way, and had no doubt of my ability to save my own soul by being good at last. Circumstances interrupted my plans. Anxieties and apprehensions arose; and having, by God's blessing on his own word, discovered my mistake in time, the relief, the joy with which I surrendered myself into the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ for guidance and salvation was but faintly illustrated by my feeling when I gave up my ship into the pilot's charge this morning. Now I have peace; Jesus has settled all my affairs for eternity, and marked out my course through time; and while

'He holds the helm, and guides the ship,'

I have nothing to fear; for if storms arise, he is on board to still them, and no shipwreck can ever happen to those who trust in him. I found that he who trusts in his own heart is a fool; but whose trusteth in the Lord Jesus Christ, mercy shall compass him about, and the Pilot's skilful hand shall steer him safe to port."

I need not add that, while we shook hands in warm congratulations on our safe arrival at home, our hearts beat in sympathizing acknowledgment of the grace that had made us citizens of a still better country, and partakers of the same precious faith in Him who will conduct us safely thither.

B. T.

HAPPY DEATHS.

"My dear cousin, I am glad I have found you at home," said Miss Evans, a good-natured but fussy-looking person, as she entered the quiet drawing-room of her relative,

Mrs. Watson. "I have walked all the way from Fairy Hill to tell you of the delightful letter I have had from Sophy Newland's mother. I would have brought it, but had to leave it with another friend to read to her young people, and you will, I am sure, be equally desirous to read it to yours."

"First let me know what the letter is about," said Mrs. Watson, smiling at her cousin's eagerness.

"Ah! I forget I had not told you about Sophy's death."

"Death! Sophy Newland dead! I am very, sorry indeed."

"No sorrow for her, dear; her mother is nothing but joy. Such a happy death! such a sweet frame of mind! I never read anything more edifying than the dear girl's dying experience. You will read it all for yourself."

"But you surprise me; I was not aware that Sophy made any profession of religion," observed Mrs. Watson.

"No more she did, poor dear, until about two months since. Wonderful are the Lord's ways! He brought her to a sick-bed that he might bring her to himself. She caught cold at a pic-nic which took place at her uncle's. At first it seemed nothing, and she tried to shake it off; but it fastened on her lungs. For a long time she put away the thought of death—that was natural you know; but when she found there was no hope, she gave herself entirely to the consideration of the one thing needful, and oh! she died so happy!"

Mrs. Watson was silent, but she looked sorrowful.

"Be assured it is not a matter for grief, my dear," continued her bustling companion. "Oh the way she talked to every one who visited her, and the way she comforted her mother, and spoke to her sister, telling her of the peace the gospel can give in death! Delightful! was it not?—such a remembrance for the poor mother!"

"But how much more delightful," replied Mrs. Watson, "it would have been to have been able to look back upon her dear child's early acquaintance with God, upon her having known the Scriptures from a child, and walked daily according to the patterns there set before her; to have remembered, with the peace which the gospel gave her in death, the happiness it gave her in life."

"Ah, well, we are short-sighted creatures you see; the Lord has his own time and ways, and——"

"My dear cousin, the Lord's times and ways are those

revealed to us by himself. His time to every one, to the child as well as to the adult, is '*Now*.' His ways are, 'Train up *a child* in the way he should go.' He acts as little arbitrarily as he does dependently. It often pleases him indeed to make up for our deficiencies, but let us beware of laying those deficiencies to his account, as if it were a part of his plan to take all the work upon himself, and leave us nothing to do but to wait for its accomplishment."

"Well, I don't mean that, of course; but the fact is we do not see many brought in childhood to embrace religion."

"And why is it so? The Bible gives us abundant reasons to believe that the younger the offering the more acceptable to God. The lambs of the flock are very precious to Christ; why are they so few? Has he failed in his part, or have we in ours, that when death approaches the young, religion has so often to be learned as a new and strange lesson—one never appropriated before, and hard to be appropriated then?"

"Well, Sophy did appropriate it at any rate. Indeed I seldom heard of a more happy and triumphant death."

Mrs. Watson laid her hand gently upon that of her enthusiastic friend. "Dear cousin," she said, "is it judicious to paint in such glowing colours the happy dying experience of one who by your own account, until she knew that she was dying, thought little if anything of religion? I know the *metempsychosis* is done every day; and may it not be one of the reasons why we see so few coming forward in very early life, to devote their unworn powers of body and mind to the service of God? Are they not encouraged to put off the consideration of their soul's concerns, by the number of *happy deaths* of which they are continually told, and which it may be feared bear too large a proportion to the number of *holy and useful lives*?"

Miss Evans looked a little disconcerted, and more than a little annoyed at Mrs. Watson's remarks. "Well," she said, "I do not think we have any right to limit God, as if he would not as easily, and would not as readily, convert a soul on a dying bed as at any other season."

"Assuredly he both can and will; I neither limit his mercy nor his power: nay, further, I acknowledge to have met with more than one of such cases as we are speaking of, respecting which I have said with the calmest conviction of my judgment, '*Here is a genuine though a death-bed conversion.*' I have no doubt there are such; what I condemn is the multiplying details of such events, the parading them

before the world, and publishing to all whom you can reach, the happy dying experience of those who in the season of health were quite willing to forget that God existed. I am of opinion that for one young person who has been arrested in a heedless course by such details, fifty have been led to put off repentance to a dying hour, and a hundred have been turned with disgust from religion, when they have contrasted the professed dying experience of joy in God with the living protest against his authority.

"But now," continued Mrs. Watson, "*I have something to tell you; do you know Mrs. Shirley?*"

"The exemplary promoter of every good work? Assuredly I do."

"She is gone to her Father's house of many mansions."

"Is it possible? Why, I saw her in her usual place last Sunday."

"I suppose she was seldom absent; her death was quite sudden—instantaneous!"

"Oh, how awful!"

"Well I cannot see that! everything, you know, depends upon what the life has been, and we are no strangers to the character of hers. Solemn indeed to the survivors is the lesson conveyed by a sudden death. It brings home to them their own position, and the frail tenure by which they hold this life; but awful to the servant of Christ it is not."

"Yet surely every one would wish for time for reflection?"

"My dear cousin, Mrs. Shirley had been reflecting for fifty years. If God had sent a messenger a month ago to tell her she was to die this morning, she would have had only the same subjects for reflection which have occupied her all that time, during which I will venture to say she never passed a day without realizing the certainty of death, and her obligations to Him who 'hath abolished' it."

"Then her dying testimony would have been so important."

"To us it appears so; but her life was one long testimony. A gentleman of my acquaintance was asked by another with regard to a Christian relative recently translated to glory, 'In what state of mind did he die?' 'I cannot tell you,' was the reply, 'in what state of mind he died, for his disease prevented him from giving utterance to his feelings, but I can tell you in what state of mind he

lived, and that is far more satisfactory.' I have often thought it was an excellent reply."

"It certainly was, yet you would not be disposed to part with the dying testimony of the eminent servants of Christ who are now in his presence, would you?"

"Certainly not: nor will I deny that there may be to the long-established believer an enjoyment granted in the sense of approaching death, far beyond what he has experienced in the most favoured seasons of his life. A friend of mine once said to me, 'If you are with me when I am dying, and I am capable of understanding you, tell me that the hour is come.' 'Why would you wish to know it?' I inquired. 'That I may feel the delight,' was the reply, 'of knowing that I am just going into my Redeemer's presence.'"

"Beautiful! oh, how beautiful!"

"Yes, it is beautiful; but its beauty consists in this, that it was the simple winding up of long, long years of love to the Redeemer and efforts for his glory." It would not be beautiful as the utterance of one who, until laid upon a dying bed, never acknowledged even in words the obligation of the creature to the Creator, of the sinner to the Saviour, of the defiled to the Sanctifier."

Miss Evans mused for a few minutes on what had passed; then turning to Mrs. Watson, she said, "I do believe you are right, and it may be that we busy people have often done harm where we thought to do good. Still I cannot but hope that all is well with dear Sophy Newland."

"Cherish your hope, cousin," answered Mrs. Watson, "but cherish it within your own bosom: it will be none the less pleasant for that. Remember that if the uncertain hope you entertain of her is so sweet, the hope founded on a life early given to Christ must be precious indeed to surviving friends; and seek to undo any harm you may inconsiderately have occasioned, by henceforward endeavouring to win your young friends to an early surrender. While you tell them that God is willing to receive them as penitent believers in Jesus Christ at any time, show them that it is folly, madness, ingratitude, presuming on his goodness and forbearance to wait for a dying hour. Oh, if half the prayers were offered, if half the pains were taken, if half the anxiety were felt, that young persons might be induced to devote themselves as living, which are constantly at work to lead them as dying, sacrifices to Christ, we might, perhaps, hear less of happy deaths, but we should behold many, many more happy lives. A happy death

would not then be a thing to be spoken of with wonder and delight as a matter of comparatively rare occurrence: it would be as naturally expected as the lovely setting of a summer day, or the glorious rising of 'a morning without clouds.'"

M. B. T.

A DISTRICT VISITOR'S NOTE-BOOK.

It may be imagined that in a district comprising from thirty to forty families many varieties of character would be met with, and glimpses be obtained of many an interesting page in the book of human life. But whatever might be the difference in other respects, one point of resemblance had not failed to strike us on our first visits,* to which time and closer acquaintance only gave more impressive confirmation. Into every dwelling, whatever its outward aspect, and whatever the condition of its inmates, sorrow and suffering, in one shape or other, had been before us. In some cases the sad history was at once unfolded; in others only a few words were dropped at first, and the grief which had furrowed the cheek, and which filled the eyes with tears, was not confided to us till we came to be known and trusted in as friends.

It was the duty and the privilege of the District Visitor to direct the "weary and heavy-laden," from whatever cause, to the Saviour, who alone could give them "rest;" but the words of comfort too often fell unheeded on careless ears, or were responded to by the cold, unmeaning assent, more disheartening than silence. Nor was this the only difficulty which we had to encounter in the beginning of our work. We endeavoured to explain our errand with the kindness and Christian courtesy which we felt due to the poor no less than to the rich; but it was not everywhere that we were received with a smile of welcome. In one or two instances the door half-opened, or the repelling look, said, as plainly as words, could have said, that such visitors were not wanted there.

Our first experience of this kind was at the entrance of a trim little cottage, with the name of "Darby, Shoemaker," painted in slim white letters on a green board, above the door. Having hitherto met with no repulse, we had almost forgotten its possibility, and it was not until Mrs. Darby asked us, in no pleasant tone, "What did you please to want?" that we felt ourselves intruders into the snug front room, with its gaily-flowered carpet spread over the middle of the floor, its shining

* See Tract Magazine, October, 1853, p. 271.

oak-table, on which lay the shoes she was binding, and its gay pictures of the History of Joseph hanging round the walls.

"We have called," said the mild voice of my companion, "to say that we shall be very glad if at any time we can be of use to you. If you should be ill you might like a friend to come and see you now and then; or, if you have children, we can help you, perhaps, in putting them to school."

Mrs. Darby had a sharp, worn face, and small keen eyes, with which she now surveyed us from head to foot. Then, taking up her work, she began to stitch with all her might. "No, I don't want any help," she answered, shortly. "I have had more sickness and trouble than enough, for my share; but you can do me no good. As for my children, they are growing up and have done with school. I don't want any help." And she sat down, still stitching, and looking resolutely at her work, with an evident determination to say no more.

We exchanged a silent look and then turned away, telling Mrs. Darby that she had only to send for us if she should find at a future day that we could do her any service. She made no reply, and we took care to speak at our departure with a tone and manner as kindly as upon our entrance. She rose silently and closed the door upon us. "The time will come, perhaps," thought I, as we dropped the latch of the little wicket-gate; and it did come. How different was that dwelling when I next entered it!—how changed the appearance of its owner! But there was a long interval; and often, as I went by, I used to catch a glimpse of Mrs. Darby's spare figure at the window, bending over her work—the cold glance of her eye, if she happened to look up, invariably recalling to me the words, "You can do me no good; I don't want any help."

How great was the contrast of this reception with that given to me a few days afterwards by the inhabitant of the adjoining cottage, the aged widow Stanley! She was not at home when we made our first call; but one bright morning, as I was passing, I saw the old woman, in her black bonnet and short grey cloak, just unlocking her door; and, rather in answer to my look than to my words, she respectfully invited me to enter. I went in accordingly and sat down, and widow Stanley occupying an old arm-chair opposite to me, I began, after a few remarks, to explain the object of my visit. The good woman listened with civil attention, but answered warily, and regarded me, as I thought, with a scrutinizing look. I soon found that she misunderstood my motives, and suspected that I came rather with the desire of making a proselyte

to my own particular views than from the simple wish to be of use to her; and she was at some trouble to tell me, without giving offence, that she was a constant attendant at the little chapel on the other side of the road, and could not by any means think of leaving it for any temporal advantage.

My heart warmed to the old woman while she spoke, and I silently "thanked God and took courage" that at last I had met with one whose religion seemed more than a mere form of words or an empty name. I knew that the truth "as it is in Jesus" was preached in that little chapel with simplicity and plainness of speech; and I felt that among the people of Christ there was a closer, holier bond than that of outward services and modes of worship. I remembered the Saviour's words, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;" and I liked widow Stanley the better for her attachment to the "Bethel," where she had perhaps often met with and been blessed by her God. It was so different from the cold apathy, or the insincere pretension, that was painfully evident amongst her neighbours. So, in a little while, the widow forgot her misgivings, and with a smile on her face, and a light of pleasure in her faded eyes, we were talking together almost like old friends.

She was now in circumstances of tolerable comfort, having a small allowance from the parish, and some help from three dutiful children; but a heavy burden of affliction had been hers for many years. She had known the extreme of poverty; she had lost two promising children by fearful accidents; and a kind, affectionate husband had been taken from her after a lingering illness. These troubles came upon her before she had learned by the teaching of the Holy Spirit where strength and comfort may be found; but they had not the effect which, under God's blessing, sorrow often has—of bringing her nearer to him. The aversion to all spiritual religion which is natural to every unrenewed heart, seemed to have been especially manifested in her conduct; for she spoke, with tears, of her determined opposition to her husband, who, for years before his death, had found peace with God, and lived as a consistent and earnest Christian. She told me how unwillingly she had outwardly joined in family prayer, and what angry and bitter thoughts used to be striving in her mind while she was kneeling beside her husband and children. Not till long after his death did she experience that blessed change which would have made them one in Christ, and have given such heavenly hopes to cheer their last sad parting; but many and

fervent had been the prayers which he offered on her behalf, and they were answered, she said, in God's own good time.

"Fifteen years," she continued, "I have been left a widow, but I am old and ailing now, and every winter's cold brings me nearer to the time when I shall see my dear husband again, and sing with him the hymn he used to love to hear :

"Come, let us join our cheerful songs
With angels round the throne."

"How was it," I inquired, with much interest, "that you came to feel so differently? You tell me that it was not your afflictions which led you to seek for a friend in Christ?"

"No," she replied, with a brightening look, "God drew me near to him by his love. When I lost my little Susan by the fire, I thought no grief could ever be like mine; and when my Stephen was frozen to death in the snow-storm, and a year after that my husband was laid in his grave, I felt sure that my heart would break; but I never thought of turning to God for help. He spoke to me in the whirlwind and the storm; but it was the 'still small voice' of mercy that reached my heart. After my husband's death, I used to go constantly to chapel, partly for his sake, for I had made him a promise; and there I heard every sabbath what Christ had done for my soul; till, at last, I took pleasure in going there, and so God drew me to him by his love. Those are true words of the Bible—'We love him because he first loved us.' I am sure it was so with me. It was a long while before I could think myself in the right way, because I had not those strong convictions my husband had; but in time God taught me to see that it was not my convictions nor my repentance that were to save me—it is Christ who has done all, and my salvation is his free gift by grace. And so you see, ma'am, I can't help loving the little chapel, where I have gone for these fifteen years, where I heard of my Saviour dying upon the cross for my sins, and where my husband used to worship God before he went to sing his praise in heaven above."

I shook hands with the good old woman, feeling that I had found a Christian friend. And as I went past the small, square-built chapel, with its low, dark windows and homely door, I thought of the prayers and thanksgivings offered within its walls—of the angels who had rejoiced over a sinner brought to repentance there; and I regarded the little unsightly edifice with a respect which I had never felt for it before.

E. W.

THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW.

FATHER in heaven ! behold us here,
 Our vows of love to pay ;
 To thank thee for another year,
 In mercy passed away :
 For life preserved, for health restored,
 For all thy gifts, we bless thee, Lord.

Thy loving-kindness crowns us still,
 Thy patience yet doth spare,
 Though often we requite thee ill
 For all this ceaseless care :
 For thy forgiveness full and free,
 Father in Christ, we come to thee.

Body and soul to Thee we bring,
 Accept thy purchase, Lord ;
 Perfect thy praise in everything,
 Thy name on all record :
 Talents are thine, however small,
 Now glorify thyself in all.

Children of dust—these bodies keep,
 Creator, they are thine ;
 Thou wilt preserve in death's long sleep,
 And raise with power Divine :
 Sickness and death thy voice obey,—
 Help us to trust thee, though thou slay.

But more is ours, a life within,
 A mind that cannot die,—
 Who shall redeem this soul from sin,
 Renew, and glorify ?
 We know thee, Jesus ; we believe,
 And life eternal we receive.

Who shall condemn if Christ redeem ?
 The Judge hath paid our price ;
 All things are ours, this world's short dream,
 Heaven's future paradise,
 And now, the peace of God descends,
 Christ's legacy to all his friends.

For all thy gifts we thank thee, Lord ;
 Things present, things to come ;
 For every promise of thy word,
 Which cheers our journey home.
 That light to others may we show,
 Nor wish alone to heaven to go.

We bring thee, Lord, the coming year,
 May every day's swift flight
 Leave us more ready to appear
 In glory's perfect light ;
 Our Father's likeness manifest,
 In blessing others, still more blest.



THE FAMILY BLESSING.

It was on a dark, cold winter evening, as a friend and myself were crossing on foot from one town to another, through a part of the country with which we were not well acquainted, that we found ourselves at a loss to make our way out of what seemed an extensive wood. The gathering clouds, the thickening darkness, and the howling of the wind, all foretold a boisterous night. We were in doubt what to do, since to return by the way we came or to go forward seemed equally difficult. We continued to advance, but the further we went the greater the gloom, and the more we plunged into the heart of the wood. At length we determined, in our extremity, to commit our way to the Lord; and it was with lightened hearts that we resumed our journey, after having prayed to God, who is always present, and ever ready to listen to all who call upon him. We felt a degree of confidence, when we set forward again, that our footsteps would be guided, and we more thoroughly realized the feeling that we were watched over and cared for, and loneliness seemed no longer to surround us. We travelled on and on, at times halting to listen if we could catch the sound of human voice or footstep; still nothing was

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heard but the hollow murmur of the wind, which swept through the leafless trees.

Hope at length was beginning to fail; our feet were weary; the rain was descending in torrents, and we were just speaking of seeking some shelter in the wood, and spending the night there as best we could, when, to our great joy and thankfulness, a glimmering of light was seen at some distance. Quickly did we speed towards it, and gladly did we discover that it proceeded from the window of a small white farmhouse, just at the end of the wood.

How did we long for shelter, and hope to hear a kind word of hospitable welcome! We were not disappointed. The door was opened by a venerable grey-headed old man, who gave us kindly greeting, and showed by every word and action that he endeavoured to fulfil the apostle's injunctions to "use hospitality one to another without grudging," and to be careful "to entertain strangers." The fire was stirred, fresh logs were piled on, our wet garments dried, and a comfortable meal was prepared for us. During these arrangements we noticed a sickly-looking young woman, about four or five and twenty, half sitting, half reclining, close to the chimney corner. She scarcely appeared to take any notice of us; but there was a calm and happy expression in her face, which conveyed the idea that she had quite done with earthly things, and was quietly waiting her Lord's call; indeed there was an unmistakable tone about all the family, which told us at once that we were amongst a people who served a heavenly Master.

After our meal, the aged man assembled his household together, read a portion of God's word in a reverent and solemn manner, and then we all joined, with one heart and one voice, in prayer and praise to the Author of all good. The poor sickly invalid, whose voice could scarcely be heard when speaking to us, gathered up all her strength to assist in singing the glad psalm of thanksgiving. A beautiful sight it was—the silvered head of the old man, his two little grandchildren, one on each knee, about so soon to lose a mother's care; his tall, hardy, healthy son-in-law, seated by his dying wife; and other members of the household, all joining together in worship. Oh, surely Christ was there in the midst of the few gathered together in his name.

Would that we could see family worship more universal than it is! but how many make excuses for the neglect of this great duty! Some, professing to be Christians, plead want of time. But is not this a most awful statement for a

Christian parent to make? No time to seek to bring down the blessing of God upon his household! Again, some plead their inability to conduct the devotions of a family in a suitable manner. My friends, have you ever tried? You know not what you can do till you have actually made a beginning; and it is one of those duties in which you may look for assistance from on high. How can you expect family blessings without family prayer? or look for a continuance of family mercies without family praise? Can you expect God's smile if you do not ask for it? Adversity, too, comes with double gloom and terror into a prayerless house. And surely it is a means of grace for the parent as well as for the children; it helps to fan the flame of devotion in his soul, and it is a fresh bond upon his Christian consistency to consider that he thus places himself constantly in the view of his family as a man of religion; and, provided he sustains this service by a consistent example, how much does it tend to exalt him in the estimation of his household! how prepared are they all to submit to his authority by the reverence they have acquired for him! and thus his prayers procure for him the ready obedience of love. Family prayer, I have often noticed, will promote domestic peace and union when no other means could, and keep up that spirit of kindness and mutual forbearance so essential for our happiness. It is also often followed with a blessed effect upon the stranger who at any time may be sojourning with us. It is well, too, to think how fearful is the condition of those who neglect this act of homage to God: "Pour out thy fury," says the inspired prophet, "upon the families that call not on thy name." While, on the other hand, God's favour is towards those families who serve him: "The house of the righteous shall stand;" and "The tabernacle of the upright shall flourish," Prov. xii. 7; xiv. 11.

But to return to my story and our farm-house friend. When all had retired to rest, and we were left alone, I ventured to put a few questions to our host respecting his dying daughter. The old man told us, with tears, that she had been the blessing of the house for many a year. It appeared that our aged friend and his wife were hard-working, thrifty sort of people, "well to do in the world," as it is called, bringing up a large family with every care and attention to their outward appearance of respectability, but regardless of training them for eternity. True, they kept up a form of religion; that is, when the weather would permit them to walk such a distance, they liked to be seen in their seat at church, because this

made them more respectable in the eyes of their neighbours, and made them more satisfied with themselves. But troubles soon fell upon them : as their children grew up, first one and then another turned out badly ; and their eldest son, whom they had hoped to have found a prop for their old age, left his home with some wild companions, went to sea, and was never heard of afterwards. The poor old man was almost choked when telling us this part of his history. He said the boy was their pride, and his wife never recovered this heavy blow, but gradually sank and sank, till they had to lay her in that last silent home where all things are forgotten.

About this time a good and pious clergyman came to their little church, and his preaching was blessed to the soul's good of the old man's youngest daughter, then about sixteen years of age, who, after receiving the truth as it is in Jesus, rested not till she had striven with all her might and influence to alter many things in her unhappy home. She met with much opposition, it is true, much ridicule, and some persecution ; and at times she felt weary and faint in well-doing, and was almost tempted to give up home reform as hopeless, and confine herself to working amongst the sick and needy around her. She found the "patient continuance in well-doing" a very difficult task ; but she determined to make one last effort by trying to introduce family prayers.

When she first proposed it no one would listen to her ; they shunned the subject, or mockingly told her she would only have chairs and tables to listen to her. However, she persevered, and gave her father no rest till he grumblingly said she might read a chapter out loud morning and evening if she chose, only it was of no use to ask him to do it ; and he did not care, he said, if he listened to her if he happened to be in, but he should not plague himself to come at any particular time just for her fidgets : for his part he could not see why she would not let everybody alone to read his Bible just when he was minded to.

"Oh, gentlemen," the old man said, looking up at us, "when I think of all my obstinacy and perverseness, I marvel at the Lord's patience and longsuffering towards me, and wonder the words went not forth, 'Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?' Well, sirs, my dear child gladly took this grudgingly given consent ; and she made the girl who helped in the house, and as many of her brothers and sisters as she could, listen to a small portion of God's word every day ; and then they all joined in prayer for themselves and for all

the other members of the family who persisted in keeping away. Sometimes I would sit by the fire whilst this was going on, and her sweet winning voice, her meek humble manner, and her earnest fervent prayers, at last took such hold upon me, that I liked not to be absent at the appointed hour. The words of Scripture sounded different coming from her lips, and I felt a sort of ease for my troubles at such times, that made me sure she was drawing down a blessing upon my old age, and so I became one of the most regular and zealous of the family worshippers. And now, as you have witnessed, owing to the failing health of my poor child, I take the delightful duty of conducting our devotions upon myself; and it is more especially at these times that I am enabled to feel resigned at the thought of having so soon to part with my greatest earthly treasure, for she is indeed of more value to me than all the world besides. But this trial, heavy though it be, is, I know, sent in wisdom; it is from the Lord; and shall we receive good at his hands, and shall we not receive evil? The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

After the old man had a little recovered, he said, "Now, gentlemen, you are quite strangers to me, and I am never likely to see your faces again in this world; but before you go hence, let me beg of you to use all the influence you may possess to introduce family worship into those houses where you know it to be neglected; for, believe me, I have found it bring a true blessing with it. Oh, tell the young, who are just beginning life—tell the old, who are fast leaving life—tell the rich and tell the poor—tell them all, that if they desire present happiness, and peace, and comfort in their families, and if they would hope to meet them around the throne hereafter, they must go through the school of prayer, or they cannot enjoy the holiday of praise."

Several years after we were journeying again through the same part of the country, and failed not to inquire at the farmhouse for our venerable friend; but the kindly voice and friendly look no longer greeted us. We knocked in vain. A passer-by, noticing us, said, "Ah, gentlemen, that house is dreary and empty now. The good old man, who lived there so many years, is gone to his rest. He did not long survive his favourite daughter; and now they are laid side by side in the churchyard yonder, and the other members of the family have left the neighbourhood altogether."

I have thought that, with God's blessing, some good might be done by giving a short account of this winter evening's adventure; and truly rejoiced should I be if anything herein related should induce only one family to commence the godly practice of family worship. Oh, think of the present privileges and future happiness of a truly pious household! The Lord will surely bless it, and all that pertain to it. Such a family stands near to heaven. Angels of light, that minister to the heirs of salvation, encamp around their dwelling; and He who is the watchful Shepherd, who never slumbers nor sleeps, is there; and at last that family shall enter its heavenly, its eternal home in the mansions of glory, the "Father's house" above. Death may send its godly members, one after another, to the silent grave, till, perhaps, one solitary mourner alone be left; but that one would feel that "they are not lost, but gone before;" and soon all will meet on that happy shore where death can never enter, having ascended from the domestic altar to the heavenly temple—from the throne of grace to the throne of glory, to be surrounded by cherubim and seraphim, and the spirits of just men made perfect, and to be for ever with their Lord.

J. G.

TOO LATE TO-MORROW.

"I HOPE you do not regret yielding to my wish, and accompanying me to the chapel, Maria," said Jane to her sister, as they walked home together. "I thought you looked as if you liked the sermon."

"So I did," replied Maria; "and I thought the preacher's delivery very attractive."

"The delivery, Maria, is of secondary importance. I would rather know your opinion of the matter."

"Well, I thought the language remarkably good, and the reasoning so clear and powerful, that, on the whole, it was quite an intellectual treat. Are you satisfied yet, my sister?"

"No, dear Maria. I would rather hear that the solemn truths we have been listening to made an impression upon your heart."

Maria became more serious, and replied, "Perhaps you will not believe me if I say that they did."

"Dear sister, I always believe you," cried Jane. "Will you tell me what this impression was?"

"I was impressed particularly by some remarks made upon the words, 'Take heed,—while it is called To-day; lest any of

you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin,' Heb. iii. 12, 13. To be hardened—this was awful; and it seemed as if it were all meant for me."

"How so, Maria?"

"Well, Jane, will you wonder to hear that I have been for some time quite certain that you were right, and I wrong? That there was no peace nor safety but in religion—real religion? So I resolved to follow your example. Often have I made such resolutions, and as often broken them. It was under the influence of one that I went to the chapel to-day. Under these circumstances you can imagine how what was said on the danger of delay went to my heart."

"Indeed I can, dearest Maria, and I trust the impression may be abiding; but surely you are aware that in your own strength you can keep no good resolution, and you know where to apply for 'grace to help in time of need,' when the pleasures of this world would turn your thoughts from the things of eternity."

"Of course I do, Jane;—but see, brother Henry is coming towards us, looking as if he were the bearer of some delightful intelligence."

"Oh! Maria, I have been seeking for you," cried their brother when they met him. "I have borrowed uncle's horse, so that you can ride my mare to the races, and there will not be a lady better mounted on the race-course. If we set out at once, and ride fast, we shall be in time. So hasten home. put on your riding-dress, and I will have the horses at the door by the time you are ready; but no time is to be lost."

He hurried off, and Maria exclaimed, "How delightful! Henry's mare, Gulnare, is a beautiful creature; and, as he says, there will not be any lady there better mounted than myself. I was telling you, Jane, how the Miss L—'s were boasting of the appearance they would make at the races, and how ironical they were in their lamentations that I could not go."

"But are you sure that these races are such a scene as a Christian could with consistency enjoy?" inquired Jane.

"Well, Jane," Maria replied, doubtingly, "I have nothing to do with them. I only take a ride with my brother, which nobody can say is wrong."

"Then, dear Maria, don't you remember that you promised to come with me to visit the school for the children of poor tradesmen, and to try if you could be of use in forwarding so desirable an object?"

"I do, Jane; and positively I will go there to-morrow. One day can make no difference."

"To-day, while it is called to-day," murmured Jane; and they walked on in silence till they had reached the hall-door of their own residence. A little boy stood on the steps; his dress was ragged, and his countenance betrayed a long acquaintance with want and sorrow. As the sisters passed him he held out his cap, and asked for something. "No, no, I have nothing for you," said Maria, while she rang the bell; but observing the expression of intense anxiety with which he seemed to await the result of his application, she added, "I am in great haste now; call to-morrow, and I will give you something."

"Ah! it may be too late to-morrow," cried the boy, in a tone which struck Maria forcibly; but just then the door was opened, and she, remembering only the necessity of hurrying her preparations for the ride, hastened to her room.

Not long after, Maria, fully equipped, was seated on the back of the beautiful Gulnare, and, escorted by her brother, set out for the race-course.

We feel no inclination to enter upon a description of that scene of folly and vice; but even if we did, it would not be part of our duty as Maria's historian. It so happened that she was not to view it that day, nor have the triumph of letting the Miss L—'s see what a stylish appearance she made. "No time to lose!" cried her brother as they cantered along. "No time to lose! These were the very words of the preacher, though with a far different meaning," thought Maria; and there was something painful in the reflection, for in the midst of all her pleasant anticipations she sighed. They had proceeded at a quick pace about half way, when the mare that Maria rode, not being as well trained as she was handsome, took fright at some timber which lay on the road-side, and becoming unmanageable, threw the poor young lady on a heap of stones, from which she was taken up senseless by her terrified brother and a countryman who was passing. She was carried to a neighbouring cottage, where soon, to the joy of her brother, she opened her eyes and spoke. It appeared, after a while, that a dislocated wrist was the worst consequence of the fall; and the peasant who had witnessed the accident expressed surprise that there were not, at least, three or four broken limbs, saying bluntly to the sufferer, "Go down upon your knees, miss, and thank God that you were not killed. I never saw so great an escape in my life." A

carriage was procured to take Maria home, where her mother and family received a great shock in witnessing the manner of her return; but a medical gentleman, who was immediately summoned, allayed their fears by an assurance that there was no danger.

On the following morning, when Jane sat by her sister's bedside, and made particular inquiries as to how she had passed the night, Maria replied, "Restless and uneasy enough, Jane; but not altogether from the pain of the wrist. Had there been no bodily ailment, I do not think my mind would have allowed me to sleep quietly."

"Why so, Maria?"

"You remember the impression produced by the sermon we heard, Jane; though I cannot blame you if the frivolity of my behaviour immediately after made you doubt the truth of what I told you. Nevertheless, the words, 'While it is called To-day,' seemed to ring in my ear, even when my mind was full of the races. But, Jane, do you remember the little beggar-boy who was on the steps when we reached our own door? His words seemed a sequel to the minister's, for he said, 'It may be too late to-morrow,' and with a look and voice that came back to my mind through the night whenever I tried to sleep. Perhaps that poor child was hungry—starving; and I was too much absorbed in my own pleasure to stop for one moment to help him, and it may be that it is now too late. Then, Jane, a lost sinner, as I knew I was, I put off seeking Him, who only could save me, till to-morrow; and if I had been killed by the fall, it would—oh! I shudder to say it—it would have been now too late. I should have been cut off in the midst of pride and folly, a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God."

"Well, through the mercy of that God, it is not yet too late, my sister; and will you not resolve?"

"I will never resolve again, Jane—never determine to do anything to-morrow. Oh, no! while it is called to-day, let me seek Him through whom alone I can be saved, and his Holy Spirit, who can make me meet for the inheritance that is purchased with the Saviour's blood."

The Christian reader may easily imagine the pleasure and thankfulness with which Jane saw her sister penitent and humbled, and no longer trusting to her own strength, desirous of really choosing the good part which should never be taken away from her.

"Do you know, Jane," said Maria, "that although this

wrist is painful, I am not sorry—no, I am really glad it was hurt, because now I cannot, if I would, partake of the amusements and enter into the worldly company that so often tempted me from what I knew was right. There is but one reason why I regret the accident. That poor little boy, Jane! If I were able I would try to find him out and relieve him; unless, indeed, through my unfeeling cruel conduct, it is now too late;” and she burst into tears.

“Set your mind at rest upon this point, my dear sister,” replied Jane. “I, too, observed his look of extreme anxiety; and when you had gone in at the hall-door I questioned him. His story was a sad one: he had a sick mother, who was utterly destitute, and to procure nourishment for her he had come out to beg—the first time he ever did so. I accompanied him back to his miserable lodgings, and, finding everything as he had reported, procured help for the sick woman from our dear mother and another friend. I am also in hopes that the little boy will be employed and taken care of by our good minister; so you may feel easy about him.”

“Ah! Jane, how soundly and sweetly you must have slept last night after doing all this. Won’t you pray for me, my sister, that I may have help from above always to do what is right ‘while it is called To-day,’ and never be induced to defer it, lest it should be too late to-morrow?”

E. F. G.

THE DIVINE STRANGER.

EMMAUS is a little village seven or eight miles north-west of Jerusalem. It is through a road of rocks that one must get to it, if going from Jerusalem. Tracts of fruitful soil, however, there are, well clothed with vegetation, here and there relieving by their soft green shades the dull and sombre-looking district which embosoms and encircles them; while a valley near the village is watered by sparkling fountains, which have ever been treasures better than silver to the eastern herdsman or farmer. Lying at a distance from the great thoroughfares, the place has never been a noted one or much frequented. Josephus does not mention it. Even in the palmy days of the Hebrew monarchy, few travellers went to that lone village; but a little less than two thousand years ago, a little group of wayfarers one day went thither, who have associated with the scenery recollections which, to the end of time, will live in Christian hearts.

Two of our Lord’s disciples, on the day of his resurrec-

tion, were walking that way. They had issued from the old fish gate of the Holy City, and had gone some distance on their road. They were talking anxiously of the past and the future—of what Jesus had suffered—of the reports of his rising from the dead, and of the prospects of that religion to which, though they but imperfectly comprehended it, their hearts clung with reverence and affection. But fear was ready to overmaster hope, and sorrow was so deeply imprinted on their countenances that any one who looked them in the face might see that some bitter grief was in their souls.

A stranger at length overtook these woe-stricken men, whose eye read in their hearts what they little thought he could discern. Christ, before his death, had appeared to his disciples under a form which prevented them from recognising him at first. On the waves of the lake of Galilee he came to them as a mysterious being, superior to the laws of nature—as the Lord of the elements, as a mighty Spirit, whose chariot was the whirlwind, and the waters his pathway. Then was he hidden under a mantle of terror, and clothed in vestments of awful grandeur which awakened amazement and fear. But now they fail to recognise him for another reason. He hides his glory beneath a veil of lowliness, and they dream not that one so great is nigh. In harmony with his purpose of temporary concealment, he seemed as if ignorant of the events which had just transpired. His crucifixion had filled Jerusalem with excitement; yet, he asked “what things had come to pass there?” They little thought how much better that stranger was acquainted with the facts, and how incomparably more of their meaning he perceived than they. A fourth traveller meeting the three in earnest conversation, might have noticed little difference between them, but there was an infinite difference; the remembrance of which imparts to the reading of the narrative unutterable interest.

They thought of Gethsemane, and Calvary, and Joseph's garden, and so did he. But while, in their view, over these scenes and the events connected with them there rested a cloud of mystery, he clearly understood their reasons, and fully anticipated their results. They saw only a cross and a sepulchre: he saw a sceptre and a throne. Their minds were filled with the thought of an ignominious death; his was in the possession of the true idea of that death as an atoning sacrifice. They fancied that an end was come to their Master's mission, that it had been ignobly broken off in the very midst, that his purposes and hopes had been crushed in

their early budding, that his sun had gone down while it was yet day: he knew that what had taken place was only the opening of a new and wonderful chapter in his unequalled history, that his mission thus far had been only fulfilled in exact accordance with its original design, that in past sorrow were the seeds of coming glory; that if his sun had dipped behind a cloud, it was on the point of bursting out again in revived splendour more radiant than before. Never were there three minds linked together in friendly converse, with a greater difference between the one and the other two.

The nature and purpose of Christ's death have been since revealed, fully revealed, so far as man's needful knowledge of it is concerned; but then it was not so. The only mind on earth, at that time, which could penetrate into the true design of the event which had just occurred on Calvary was His who talked with those two Jewish travellers, then so lost in perplexity and depression. The key of the mightiest of God's secrets was in the stranger's hand. The greatest of all deeds he had himself just been doing, and he alone understood it. A Divine mind, an infinite intellect was shrouded under that humble form. He looked with other eyes on nature than they; and so also he did upon the wonders of redemption. As they walked along that hill-girt road, and gazed on those old craggy rocks, and looked along the well-watered and verdant valley, and glanced upwards at the cloud-dappled sky, gilded and crimsoned with the rays of an afternoon sun, he only, of the three, fully appreciated that scene, embraced that world of nature of which it was a little portion, comprehended that universe in which it had its place hidden and obscure,—and so, as these three talked of the things that had happened at Jerusalem, and dwelt upon the historical incidents of the previous days, and brought before their memory the three crosses, he only perceived all that was meant and accomplished by the sufferer in the midst.

They have been talking so as to show their ignorance, talking so as to show that hitherto they have profited little by their Bible reading, and their Lord's instructions; and now, beginning with a reproof, he proceeds to interpret the great enigma. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have written." Slow to believe indeed! With the letter they might be acquainted, but into the spirit of the Hebrew Scripture they had not penetrated. The depth of its meaning rested with him. The sacred record had never yet conveyed to them such conceptions of him as formed their

true import, such as actually dwelt in his mind, such as he now proceeded to unfold:—"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them the things concerning himself." How should we love to dwell upon that evening exposition by the way-side; to think of the flood of light which then fell on the old records of the Jewish church; to imagine how new and glorious thoughts began to rise and swell on their once darkened minds, while their hearts burned within them under the glowing touch of his Divine hand. Fancy listens to that voice in the tones of which authority and gentleness are marvellously blended, and it sees the look of reverence and awe, of faith and joy in the countenances of those two entranced listeners. Plato in the academy, Aristotle in the grove, Zeno in the porch, with groups of disciples hanging on their lips, are mean pictures compared with Christ standing under the shadow of one of the straggling palm-trees at the entrance to Emmaus, discoursing to his favoured pupils on redemption and the love of God.

The perplexity of the two learners was this—that their Master had so suffered—that he had been condemned to death and had been crucified. They had looked on him as a redeemer, as one come to deliver them and their country from sorrow and oppression; and, lo! he was himself sorrowful and oppressed. That he ought to enter into glory they understood; they deemed his teaching and miracles worthy of universal praise, of perpetual renown. They longed that as a Master he should have the whole race of Israel for his disciples, that as a King he should have the world for his realm. But that he should suffer!—there they stumbled. Now, the object of Christ's exposition was to clear up their difficulty.

He would, no doubt, refer them to predictions of Messiah's glory. His illustrious kingship—his wide sway—his lasting reign—his beneficent rule. These points he would bring out, and set them in a blaze of splendour before their dazzled eyes. And when they said amen to all this, and told him how they had trusted that their Master would have proved the Redeemer of Israel, he went on to tell them too that it was needful for Christ first to suffer. Would he not remind them of the sacrifices in their law, of earlier date than the Sinaitic covenant? Would he not refer to the Psalms, and quote from Isaiah, Zechariah, and the rest, those pathetic laments put into Messiah's lips, those predictions of suffering and death to be fulfilled in the Messiah's history? Would he not urge that the dark pictures, as well as the bright ones, must find their

reality in the actual life of that Christ foreshadowed and foretold in the olden time? That if he was to see of the travail of his soul, his soul must first endure that travail; that if he was to see his seed, he must first make his soul an offering for sin; that if he was to ascend into the heavenly temple, he must do so not without a sacrifice of blood? The Scriptures revealed God's plan and purpose in reference to redemption. The redeeming Messiah, therefore, was under a necessity to die. The Bible, as the copy of the Divine mind, showed the map of redeeming love. There was laid down a land of glorious promise, an empire of righteousness and truth and peace, and also the pathway to it, and that was covered with thorns. The correspondence of the accomplishment with the purpose must of necessity be complete. The pathway must be trodden, ere the throne could be reached and the crown worn. The disciples had looked at only half the revelation; the interpreter now unfolded the whole.

The conversation at the time, it should be remembered, between the stranger and the two disciples would not appear to them as if it related to himself. They had not identified the speaker. If they speculated on who he was, they might imagine he was some illustrious rabbi or some new prophet. At any rate they would suppose he spoke of another; but now the moment of recognition comes. They reached the village. The journey ends. He makes as though he would go further. But he had so enchained their love and won their thoughts, that they entreat him to tarry with them: "Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And he went in to tarry with them. And now the mystery finishes; a new marvel is evolved. The speaker is himself their Master. He has been the very subject of their long conversation. He was the suffering victim and the risen Lord. "And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

More than eighteen hundred years have passed since that memorable evening conversation, and soon were the two disciples gathered to their fathers; earlier still did their risen Lord leave the earth: but the old rocks they looked at still stand there in their strength invincible by time; a type of the enduring interest of the truths the Divine speaker then

unfolded; yes, and of his own ever-living presence in the church, to illumine, teach, guide, and comfort all earnest seekers who search for him.

It is affecting to the Christian's mind to reflect on Christ's comprehension of his future history: how he knew beforehand the sufferings he was to pass through; how, while he saw the bright mountain top he was to reach, he saw the dark valley through which his pathway ran; how the sorrows of the future and the present were poured into his cup. He daily had drunk them commingled in bitter draughts. But not to dwell on that, we are forcibly taught that Christ's obligation to suffer, though immediately arising from the necessity of fulfilling Scripture, originally arose from the Divine purpose of which the Scripture was the transcript. In a deep sense does that question fall upon our hearts, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" Now that the prophecy is unfolded and the fact revealed, we catch glimpses of wonderful principles which underlie them. We learn that there is something in God superior to power; that his power is directed by higher attributes; that justice, wisdom, and love are the sovereign perfections of the Divine nature; that he does not barely put forth his strength, but does only what, according to the law of his holy and perfect nature, he *ought* to do. "It *became* him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." The fact of redemption reveals the moral character of God, and the fundamental principles of his government. We deduce not the fact from *à priori* reasoning on that character, and those principles, but light on *them* flows from *that*.

And another great truth comes out as we dwell on the beautiful narrative. He who is the subject of the Scriptures must enlighten us in the understanding of them. We are as dependent upon Christ for instruction as the two disciples were. It is true we want not a further revelation, but we want a spiritual perception to discern the things concerning Christ. We want the gift of the Spirit to lead us into all truth; we need to place ourselves under the unerring and efficacious tuition of that great Teacher of the church who is not yet to come, but is already come, and waits to illuminate and quicken the docile and devout.

Nor can we close this chapter of inspired story without recognising in it the foreshadowing of a truth which comes

home to our inmost heart, even this, that the pathway of the Master is the pathway of the servant, that we through much tribulation* must enter the kingdom. He whose head is crowned with glory, has left behind the track of his pilgrimage through this world in the prints of bleeding feet. In this respect, as in others, we must walk in his steps. Suffering purifies, disciplines, exalts, brings out the graces that God has put within us, when that suffering is accompanied by his Spirit. The bruising of the cinnamon sends forth its fragrance, and the trial of the Christian elicits the odours of his piety. But the pain is short compared with the peace that shall follow, and the prospect of that diminishes all present griefs. The showers of sorrow in the believer's path fall from retiring clouds, whose edges are gilded with sunlight, and on whose bosom, like the emblazoning of a banner, there is painted a many-coloured rainbow, the symbol of "the better hope."

J. S.

THE TWO PATHS.

"Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner."—Prov. xiii. 6.

"I HAVE long wished for an opportunity of speaking with you alone, Henry," exclaimed James Mayburn, addressing his fellow-shopman, as they entered the little attic chamber which was the home of the former. The business of the day was over; and a heavy fall of rain had prevented one of the young men from taking his accustomed stroll for air and exercise, and induced the other to accept of the shelter which his friend's lodging afforded. The light from an opposite street lamp illuminated the apartment so far as to make the addition of a candle unnecessary, at least for the purposes of conversation, and they sat down at the window together.

"Why, what matter of mighty moment have you to communicate?" Henry asked, with a laugh which, though loud, was evidently not the laugh of light-heartedness.

"It is a painful subject," answered his companion.

"Then, pray, don't introduce it to-night. I am not in the humour to hear anything disagreeable. I would sooner brave the storm," said Henry; and as he spoke, he rose with an impatient gesture.

"My conscience will not allow me to be silent any longer," James resumed, taking his guest by the hand, and gently attempting to draw him again to the seat by his side. "I

feel I *must* speak out, or I shall bring guilt on my own soul."

"Speak out! what can you mean?" Henry exclaimed, in a voice which faltered with agitation.

There was a pause, for Mayburn felt a choking sensation in the throat when he tried to utter the words his heart dictated. The young men had been associated from childhood. They had been schoolfellows and playmates; they had together commenced their career of active life, and they still loved each other, though a wide disparity of character and difference of pursuits had caused a slight estrangement. James, for some time past, had strong reasons for suspecting that his companion was carrying on a system of petty theft. His dress, and the expensive amusements in which he indulged, could not, he knew, be purchased from his small salary; and his mother, who was a widow, had, he was sure, neither the inclination nor the means to encourage extravagance and dissipation. Tenderness towards the feelings of his early friend had hitherto, however, kept him silent; but, impelled by a sense of duty, he was now resolved upon embracing the present opportunity of making known his fears.

"Do not profess that you cannot understand me, Henry," he at length said. "I am convinced that my meaning is well known to you. Spare me, then, the painful necessity of an open accusation by a frank confession."

The young man averted his face that the strong light might not reveal the blush of conscious guilt which rose spontaneously to his cheek. "I am well aware that you suspect me of some delinquency, but you must put the words of confession into my mouth, if you wish me to make it," he returned, with an attempt at gaiety.

"Your equivocation does but deepen my conviction of your guilt," his companion observed, with an expression of great concern. "But, remember, there is One to whom your most secret thoughts and actions are known, and that you will one day have to give an account of them in his awful presence."

The omnipresence and omniscience of God, and the solemn realities of the day of judgment were truths familiar to the ear of the youth; he had learned them in the happy days of childhood by his pious mother's side; and though since his residence in London his ungodly and immoral associates had done their utmost to shake his belief in a future state, and he was practically an infidel, conscience, with its still small voice,

would sometimes whisper that these were true in spite of his efforts to drown it.

"Your obstinacy," resumed Mayburn, finding that he maintained a dogged silence, "your obstinacy places me in a most distressing situation. By concealing my suspicions, I feel I in some degree become a partaker of your crime; that I tacitly encourage you to persist in a course which is ruinous to your body and soul; and, at the same time, allow my master and his family to be wronged."

"Well, if this is all you have to say to me, I'll wish you good night," Henry exclaimed, suddenly rising and taking up his hat. "The storm is over now," he carelessly added, looking out at the window.

"This is not all," his friend interposed, once again attempting to detain him by gentle force; "I cannot let you go till I have urged you, for the sake of your peace of mind, your character, your mother, nay, for your own soul's sake, to break off the connexions which have been the means of leading you into crime and—"

"Meekly give myself up into the hands of the officers of justice, I suppose!" the young man interrupted, with a forced laugh.

"Not so. If you acknowledge your offences, and ask forgiveness, Mr. Bayfield will, I feel confident, treat you with lenity. He is a kind master, and a Christian, and having at present no suspicion of your guilt, he will view the matter in a very different light if the confession is voluntary than he will if it be wrung from you by the fear of punishment."

"Am I to understand, then, that you intend to be my accuser?"

"Not unless forced into it by yourself."

"And this is a proof of the friendship you have so long professed for me, is it?"

"It will be in obedience to the dictates of my conscience."

Henry moved towards the door.

"We must not part thus. I will go home with you if you are determined to go," said Mayburn,—and followed him with a quick step down the stairs.

The young men walked side by side, but Henry maintained a sullen silence, though his companion continued to address him, using pathetic entreaties and solemn appeals. Their way led over Westminster Bridge; but having reached the middle arch, the former suddenly stopped, and abruptly wished his friend good-by, saying, "I have an engagement at a house

at the foot of the bridge, and I wish to be alone for a few minutes."

There was now no indication of anger in the tones of the youth, and Mayburn gathered hope from the fact. "You will think over and profit by what I have said to you, will you not?"

"I will," was Henry's laconic reply.

They shook hands, and parted; but ere James had proceeded many paces, he turned to look once more at his early friend. To his surprise, Henry had halted also, and was looking back. • Again their eyes met, and from the apparent expression of affection which beamed in Henry's countenance, James felt a strong inclination to rejoin him. The intention being, however, perceived, the delinquent waved his hand in token of denial, and hastened on.

The morning found James Mayburn at his accustomed duties; but not so his fellow-shopman. Henry was in the habit of transgressing the rules by coming late; his absence did not, therefore, for a time create surprise; but when hour after hour passed, and he did not appear, his master grew angry, and his friend apprehensive that all was not right. A person was sent to his lodgings, to ascertain the cause; and the worst fears of Mayburn were corroborated when information was brought that the young man had absconded in the night, taking with him all that was movable and valuable, and leaving long arrears of rent unpaid. This intelligence induced Mr. Bayfield to make a strict scrutiny into his own property, and it was now discovered that a considerable sum was missing. Of course, the inference drawn was that Henry Powell was the thief.

The character of James Mayburn stood so high for piety and strict integrity, that not the slightest suspicion was attached to him. A warrant was immediately taken out for the apprehension of the delinquent; but he and his accomplices effectually eluded the search of the officers, and thus the unhappy affair for the present ended.

We say for the present, for sin goes with the perpetrator of crime, and generally brings its punishment in some form, even in this world. Dishonesty cannot, therefore, commend itself, even on the ground of expediency or advantage: "The way of transgressors is hard."

The parting of these two youths on the bridge which divides the two counties may, not unaptly, be compared to their respective courses in life. Every step taken by them

widened the distance, the moral distance which separated them. Fifteen years intervened ere they met or even heard of one another; and the expiration of those years found James Mayburn a respectable, flourishing tradesman, and Henry Powell a felon in one of the London jails.

Mayburn, now a husband and the father of a happy family, was one evening called from the fireside circle, by being told that an old woman, who had sent in an urgent request that he would see her alone, waited in the passage.

"What is your business with me, my good friend?" he kindly said, beckoning her into the breakfast parlour. The woman burst into a flood of tears.

"You are in trouble, I see. Well, don't give way to despondency: let me know what it is; perhaps I can aid you."

"Don't you know me, James?" she sobbed out.

"No, I really don't," said he, smiling at the familiar manner in which he was greeted—a manner to which he had been so long unaccustomed that it seemed strange to his ear.

"My name is Powell; I am the mother of—" Here the poor woman stopped from excessive agitation and wept afresh.

"Mrs. Powell! Is it possible? What changes time has wrought! But what of your unhappy son?"

"Oh, sir, it is his wretched condition which has brought me here."

"It is—let me see, fourteen—fifteen years, I think, since I last saw him. We were then fellow-shopmen. Where may he be now?"

"He is in prison. Oh that I should have lived to see this day!"

"Nay, say not so, my good friend. God may have purposes of mercy towards him yet. Your prayers for him may yet be answered. Now, tell me the circumstances of the case, and we will see what can be done."

"I came here on purpose to ask your assistance, sir. I knew you and my poor lad loved each other when you were play-mates, and I thought—I hoped—you would use your influence to prevent his being torn from me for ever."

"Is his sentence transportation for life?"

"I am told that will be the punishment for his offence."

"You may depend on my exertions on his behalf, my friend. I will not pain you by asking further particulars," he tenderly added, only tell me where Henry is, and I will endeavour to see him in the morning."

The wretched mother could only weep her thanks. She

whispered the name of the jail in which her son was confined, shuddering with horror as her lips pronounced it, and then hastened back to a home which his misconduct had rendered doubly desolate.

The sequel is sad, but only that in which a career of vice must of necessity end. The generous efforts of Mayburn to obtain a commutation of Henry Powell's sentence were not altogether unsuccessful. He was awarded seven years of banishment, instead of transportation for life. It mattered, however, little to him what the term of his exile might be, for his days were numbered. A life of recklessness and dissipation is the usual precursor of disease and premature death, and such it proved in the present instance. Worn out by intemperate habits, and frequent hardships, his constitution sank under the confinement and prison discipline which he endured previous to his trial, and he died before the period appointed for his removal arrived. Before his death he strongly expressed penitence, and prayed for pardon in the name of Christ; and his pious mother entertained a hope that, in answer to her earnest prayers in his behalf, God had given him grace to repent, and believe the gospel, yet the evidence of a life of obedience was wanting; and, notwithstanding the hope she entertained, grief and shame wrought their devastating effects on her already enfeebled frame, and finally brought her grey hairs in sorrow to the grave.

A. M. S.

THERE'S A GOOD TIME COMING.

"THERE'S a good time coming," said Aaron Howe, as he stood in his ragged coat, with his hands in his pockets, talking over the hedge of his neglected garden to a companion in the lane, when the squire's carriage went by. "Things won't always be as they are now," said he; "it's all very well for folks to roll about in their fine coaches, with prancing horses, living on the fat of the land, while some of their neighbours can hardly get salt to their porridge; but it won't always be so. There's a good time coming, when a poor man will have a chance as well as a rich one, and the sooner it comes the better."

Saying this he turned away, and began to make a wooden skewer which was not wanted. After this he set a bird-trap, though he had nothing in his garden for the birds to eat, and then idled an hour with his terrier dog in a vain endeavour to

catch a rat which had run up the drain. "Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger," Prov. xix. 15.

"There's a good time coming," said Aaron, as he met a brother sot at the pot-house door, "and we'll have many a jug together yet. The rich have had it all their own way, but there will be a change soon."

He then entered the pot-house to drink to the good time coming, thereby wasting his hours, muddling his senses, and adding to the debt that was chalked against him behind the door. "The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty," Prov. xxiii. 21.

"There's a good time coming," said Aaron, as he set off about twelve o'clock, one fine Sunday, with three or four others of the same stamp as himself, for a day's pleasuring. Folly, excess, and sabbath-breaking, are not among the things that add to a man's happiness. "God is angry with the wicked every day: if he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready," Psa. vii. 11, 12.

"There's a good time coming," said Martin Wynn to the old shepherd who was off to the Downs, one morning at five o'clock. "Trade is looking up, and wages are a trifle higher than they were. If we only keep from the public-house, and make a good use of what we get, we shall do; but if we squander our money foolishly, and waste our breath in railing at those above us, reason enough shall we have to repent it."

The old shepherd went forward to his sheep, and Martin set to work lustily with his spade, for he wanted to finish digging the potato bed in his garden before he began his day's work as a bricklayer; and this, at the rate he was working at, he was very likely to perform. "The hand of the diligent maketh rich," Prov. x. 4; "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings," Prov. xxii. 29.

"There's a good time coming," said Martin to his next door neighbour, who was of the same trade, as he passed him on his way to the savings' bank; "last year little building was going on, but this year there is plenty. I am getting a trifle beforehand with the world, laying up against a rainy day, thank God for it. It's better to have a few pounds than to be hanker-ing after a great many."

Having thus spoken, he made the best of his way to the bank, with a thankful heart. If God in his wisdom has denied us riches, "having food and raiment let us be therewith content," 1 Tim. vi. 8.

"There's a good time coming," said Martin to a fellow-worshipper, as they came together from morning service, one sabbath day, "for I do hope and trust that God's goodness and grace are greatly multiplying the number of his people, and that, according to his promise, 'the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea,'" Hab. ii. 14.

With a head and a heart full of what he had heard in the services of the sanctuary, and with a mind at peace, Martin Wynn reached his quiet dwelling, his soul magnifying the Lord, and his spirit rejoicing in God his Saviour.

It is of little use to cry out, "There's a good time coming," if we do nothing to help it forward, and one of the least likely ways of doing this is to fall into sinful discontent, idleness, drunkenness, sabbath-breaking, and impiety. The way to help on the good time coming, if there be one coming, is to love and fear God, trusting in his Son Jesus Christ, and to keep his commandments; for if there were less sin in the world there would be much less sorrow.

Whatever the times may be, good or bad, hard or easy, threatening or encouraging, this text of God's holy word will be found true to the letter—"Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him," Isa. iii. 10, 11. If through faith, which is the gift of God, we are one in Christ, then are we secure, let the times be what they may; for "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," Rom. viii. 38, 39.

G. M.

PERFECT PEACE.

I RECOLLECT on one occasion, whilst travelling amongst our English lakes, being enraptured with a scene of surpassing beauty. It was a lovely summer's evening. Scarcely a single cloud was to be seen in the sky; there was only just sufficient movement in the atmosphere to prevent the sensation of perfect stillness; and hardly a ripple could be traced on the surface of the water. Beyond, the summits of the lofty mountains were tinged with the glorious hues of sunset. The whole landscape appeared as though it had been formed only to

image the spirit of peace. But in a few hours all was changed. Dark clouds passed over the heavens; a thunder-storm broke in fury; impetuous torrents rushed down the mountain-sides, and the lake which was before so placid, was lashed in tempest. It was difficult to believe that the scenery was substantially the same as that on which I had gazed so short a time before with such inexpressible delight. Here was an appropriate emblem of what the world's peace usually is. Everything is for a season bright and prosperous, and there seems not the most distant prospect of reverse; but as in a moment, all is exchanged for gloom. And then it too frequently happens that whatever peace that prosperity might impart passes away with the departure of the prosperity itself.

But there is a peace which is not thus transient, but is perfect and lasting; and it is unspeakably desirable that we should know the secret of that peace. One beautiful passage of Scripture explains it: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee," Isa. xxvi. 3. To obtain a more distinct conception of the nature of this peace it is well to inquire what it is to have the "mind stayed on God?"

God must be known: "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace." I cannot trust any one of whom I am ignorant, nor shall I be disposed to trust him whom I believe to be incapable of helping me, any more than I should knowingly commit myself to a leaky vessel, or build on a foundation of sand. That man who really knows God as he has revealed himself in his word, will feel that he can trust him. For He is omnipotent; the "everlasting God," who "fainteth not, neither is weary;" omniscient, knowing therefore all that concerns us; infinitely wise, and therefore able to dispense to us precisely the blessings which we need; faithful, and therefore never likely to fail the soul that confides in him; beneficent, and therefore "delighting in mercy." "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe."—"They that know thy name will put their trust in thee."

There must also be reconciliation. No mind will ever truly stay itself on God which is not reconciled. There may be, in the time of overwhelming sorrow, the urgent cry for help from God; but there is nothing like heartfelt dependence upon him. Who can trust in Him with whom he is at enmity? But believing in Christ Jesus, the enmity is done away.

There is established between the soul and God a new relationship; and whilst as a father God pities his children, they approach him with filial confidence, seeking and expecting a father's mercy.

There must be, moreover, the firm belief of the Divine promises. God might be known, and there might be the full assurance of provision for reconciliation; but there would still be only a partial trust in him, unless there was something to indicate the degree in which he was ready to extend his aid. He has met this necessity by addressing to us "exceeding great and precious promises;" and we are taught as believers in Christ, that he exercises over us the care of a constantly superintending providence, regulating for us every event of life; that he will supply all our need, comfort us in every sorrow, fortify us against every temptation, render all things subservient to our best welfare, and consummate all his mercy to us on earth, by conducting us to heaven. To have the mind rightly stayed on God, there must be a fixed persuasion of the truth of these promises, and an entire dependence upon him. The degree of our faith in God's promises is just the degree in which our minds will be stayed on him.

He who thus trusts in God is kept in perfect peace. It is the reward of his trust, but it is also its natural result.

It is peace in the soul. It is not promised that there shall be averted from the Christian everything which is in its own nature calculated to produce disquietude. Though nothing happens to him but what is common to man, he is liable to all the calamities and afflictions which befall the rest of mankind. Like them, he must be prepared to meet with disappointment, with vicissitude, with sickness, with bereavement. But he has peace notwithstanding. He is like the passenger in a storm-tossed vessel—who, whilst the winds are howling around him, and the waves are rolling mountains high, feels no fear, because he has full confidence in the strength of the ship, and in the care and skill of its captain; or, like the inhabitants of some beleaguered city, who, though aware that the enemy is surrounding its walls, is convinced that its defences are impregnable. It is a calm, self-possessed, happy frame of mind. Its model is that peace which reigned in the bosom of our great Exemplar and Lord, and who left his own peace as his legacy to his church. Its sweetness and power are indescribable, for it "passeth all understanding." It is "perfect peace."

Observe the influence of this peace in the anxieties of life. Who does not know what it is to be harassed by distressing

anxieties? But how such anxieties are relieved; and even dispelled, when the soul can stay itself on God! We can cast on him all our care, when we are persuaded that "he *careth* for us." We can dismiss from our minds every anxious thought respecting either the present or the future, when we know that He who "feedeth the young ravens when they cry" has promised to "supply all our need."

See its influence also in the vicissitudes of life.—It is not a peace for the sunshine only, but also for the shade; not only for the mount, but also for the vale. The Christian cannot but feel such changes, and there may sometimes arise the disposition to murmur: but when he remembers that they have all been appointed by his wise and loving Father, and that everywhere there shines alike the light of his countenance, he is at peace. He can then say, even as he anticipates further vicissitude—

"Father, I know that all my life
Is portioned out for me;
And the changes that will surely come,
I do not fear to see:
But I ask Thee for a patient mind,
Intent on pleasing Thee."

See the influence of this peace in the time of deep affliction.—"In the world," said our Lord to his disciples, "ye shall have tribulation; but in me ye shall have peace." It is an every-day thing to see the Christian, racked by excruciating suffering, still tranquil, because sustained by the promises of God, and the sympathy of Christ. There are few things more agonizing and heart-rending than to stand by the bed of death when the eye of some loved one is fast ebbing away; to bear the cold remains to the house appointed for all living, and then, returning to the desolate dwelling, to mark the vacant place, and to feel the lack of the wonted smile. But even amidst such scenes this peace may reign, and he who "restores comfort to the mourner" can enable him to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

See the way of peace in death.—"Mark the perfect man, and behold him upright; for the end of that man is peace." Faith often achieves her noblest triumphs when her work is almost done, and the soul is about to enter on the perfect vision of heaven. Reposing on the power and grace of that Saviour who has vanquished death, he awaits in peace, and even with joy, the stroke of the last enemy.

"A holy quiet reigns around,
 A calm which life nor death destroys;
 *Nothing disturbs that peace profound,
 Which his unfettered soul enjoys."

It is perfect peace!

Reader, is this blessing yours? If not, be entreated to seek it. Be reconciled to God through Christ; then study the character and promises of God; and pray for that Spirit whose fruit is peace. The more you know of it, the more you will be convinced that there is nothing like it in the world.

S. G.

THE BIBLE IN WALES.

ONE of the earliest efforts of the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society was to provide an edition of Welsh Bibles and Testaments. The supply of twenty thousand Bibles and five thousand large Testaments was not ready till 1806; when an eye-witness thus describes its reception: "When the arrival of the cart was announced which carried the first sacred load, the Welsh peasants went out in crowds to meet it, welcomed it as the Israelites did the ark of old, drew it into the town, and eagerly bore off every copy as rapidly as they could be dispersed. The young people consumed the whole night in reading it; and labourers carried it with them to the fields, that they might enjoy it during the intervals of their labour."

A remarkable incident, mentioned in the life of Mr. Charles, with whose memory we cannot but connect these Welsh Bibles, may be here introduced. While travelling in the autumn of 1799, over a mountain in Merionethshire, one frosty night, he had his hand frost-bitten: an illness followed, and his life was in danger. While this was the case, his friends met to pray for his restoration, and one person in particular was noticed at the time for the very urgent and importunate manner in which he prayed. Alluding to the fifteen years added to Hezekiah's life of old, he entreated God to spare Mr. Charles's life also fifteen years. "Fifteen years, O Lord! add but fifteen years to the life of thy servant. Spare him for fifteen years more to thy church and thy people." Mr. Charles heard of this prayer, and it made a deep impression on his mind. He mentioned it to several friends during the last year of his life,

for his death did occur just at the close of the fifteen years. It was during this period of fifteen years that the most important acts of his life took place; the most valuable of his works were written; the complete establishment of the Sunday-schools was effected; and it was during this period he was made one of the honoured instruments employed by Providence to originate the Bible Society. What great and glorious answers were these to the fervent prayer of a poor, simple, old Christian pilgrim at Bala.

From "The Book and its Story."

PRAY ALWAYS.

In thy still morning closet pray;
At night renew thy prayer;
And wrestle on till thou canst say,
"The Lord himself was there."

And oftimes, 'mid thy busiest days,
Seek out a secret spot,
Where thou mayst ask his promised grace,
Who gives, and grudges not.

Renew thy fervour ere it dies,
Nor let the flame expire;
But evermore, with fresh supplies,
Heap up the altar fire.

Wouldst thou the cross with meekness bear?
Dwell near the mercy-seat;
The fear that haunts thee carry there,
And there temptation meet.

If thou wouldst not be dumb and weak
When evil men deride,
But bravely for thy Master speak,
Keep ever near his side.

When thou art on thy dying bed,
When sight and sound are gone,
'Till Christ in glory raise thy head
Among his saints—pray on.

O. G. 4



WHAT ARE YOU SOWING?

WHATEVER may be our condition, our occupation, or our age, the infallible word of truth represents us as engaged in one continued employment—we are sowing.

The emblem is homely; but its application is plain and simple. Permit us, then, with plainness and simplicity, but with respect and friendly concern, to urge upon every reader's consideration the important question, What are you sowing?

Sowing goes before harvest. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," is a fact which universal experience confirms. Upon the certainty of it, the husbandman cheerfully casts his seed upon the prepared soil, and covers it in, trusting to reap the reward of his labour in the natural and multiplied produce of that seed. The statement, however, has a more extensive meaning than as applied merely to the fruits of the earth; it is equally true of the soul, that "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," Gal. vi. 7.

He who sows righteousness reaps blessing; while "he that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity." "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting," Prov. xxii. 8; Gal. vi. 8. These are the words of Divine wisdom, and it is of the utmost importance to every man to know to which of these two classes of sowers he belongs. Reader, what are you sowing?

MARCH, 1854.

All the ungodly sow to the flesh. Every sin committed against God is a seed cast by the sinner, which will, at some future, but often not far distant period, bring forth its natural fruit. The sower now will be the reaper then.

Some men's sins go before them to judgment. They are so quick in fruiting, that, even in this life, the sower reaps a plentiful harvest of vanity and shame. Drunkenness and licentiousness, malice and wrath, sloth and dishonesty, are among these vigorous seeds.

Poverty, contentions, wounds without cause, sorrow, and woe—a ruined constitution, a debilitated frame, a palsied hand, a comfortless home, and a premature death—are among the fruits, the first fruits, of intemperance.

Evil reputation, foul disease, pain of body and darkness of mind, want and misery, are some of the common fruits which, in this world, he reaps who sows to the flesh the seeds of impure desire and licentious practice.

Malice and unhallowed anger too often quickly spring up into the full-grown, death-bearing plants of hatred and murder; and scarcely can fail of a harvest of remorse before the life of the sower is closed.

The fruits of slothfulness are destitution and wretchedness; and of dishonesty, suspicion, fear, and shame.

"They that sow wickedness, reap the same," Job iv. 8. Reader, what are you sowing?

Those who sow to the flesh, not only reap corruption themselves, but cause others to reap it also, "for none of us liveth to himself," Rom. xiv. 7. The "madman" who casts around him "firebrands, arrows, and death," Prov. xxvi. 18; or the foolish man who scatters, as he passes through the fields of his neighbour, the seeds of hurtful weeds, regardless of consequences, is mischievous, and deserving of grave rebuke. But his fault is small in comparison with that of the sinner who strews around him the seeds of vice and misery. This man sows more than he has power to reap alone. His family, his dependents, his friends, his neighbours, reap with him the fruits of sorrow. By his pestilential example others are taught to sow the same most noxious seeds, the harvest of which they, in process of time—with others, perhaps yet unborn—will be compelled to reap. Thus does one unholy man, by sowing to the flesh, spread around him corruption and desolation. Does not, then, the question commend itself to every man, as an inquiry of the most urgent and impressive character, What are you sowing?

Reaping will not end with the present life. The seeds of sin, unrepented of and unpardoned, are sown for eternity. This harvest will never be over. With some it may scarcely be said to commence until the soul has entered into the life beyond the grave, and feels, with horror and dismay, the first fearful experience of "the wrath to come." There, in unmitigated remorse and unspeakable agony, in utter hopelessness of relief, and in terrible forebodings of the yet future "revelation of the righteous judgment of God," Rom. ii. 5, will the unholy and condemned spirit awake to a full recognition of the truth, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." Is it such a harvest as this for which you, reader, are now sowing?

Do you answer that you are not sowing the seeds of gross and open vice, to spring up into a harvest of shame? It may be so, and yet you may be sowing to your flesh. The man who sows only for time, when he ought to be sowing for eternity, what can he expect but to reap corruption?

Honesty and industry, sobriety and self-denial, these, it may be, are the seeds from which you expect a plentiful harvest of health, competence, and good report. Be it so; you will then have your reward. But these are things which "perish in the using;" and you still may have sown only for time, when you ought to have been looking onward to eternity.

Who, then, is the wise sower? Who but he, who, sowing "to the Spirit," and having the "promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," looks forward with a "hope that maketh not ashamed," to a joyful harvest of "life everlasting?" Gal. vi. 8; 1 Tim. iv. 8; Rom. v. 5.

The Christian is a sower. The seed of godly sorrow for sin produces "repentance to salvation not to be repented of," 2 Cor. vii. 10. He sows in tears, but reaps in joy.

Believing in Jesus, and relying upon him, the seed of faith springs up into the fruits of the Spirit, and he is filled with "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." The fruit is "unto holiness," and the end "everlasting life," Gal. vi. 22, 23; Rom. v. 22.

There is no uncertainty in the harvest. The mercy, the truth, and the power of Jehovah stand engaged for the fulfilment of the declaration, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

The Christian sows for the glory of God and the welfare of man. The command is, Go, work for me to-day: the

encouragement is, "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters." The seed of the gospel which he carries with him as he passes through the world, and scatters on the right hand and on the left; and the seed of a holy and consistent example which falls silently as the dew, in his family and in the world—these both are preparatory to a future harvest in everlasting life. "My word," says God, "shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." "Let your light so shine before men," is the language of the Redeemer, "that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven," Isa. lv. 11; Matt. v. 16.

Christian sower, be diligent in your calling. Be stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. Be encouraged to believe that the seed you sow is incorruptible; and be stimulated by the voice which proclaims to you from heaven, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good," Eccl. xi. 6. And may "He that ministereth seed to the sower, multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness," 2 Cor. ix. 10.

Careless sinner, be entreated to consider what it is you are sowing. Think of the harvest you are preparing for yourself—a harvest of desolation, bitter remorse, unutterable woe. Hitherto you have sown only to the flesh; and of the flesh you must reap corruption. There is One, and One only, who can prevent the fearful consummation. There is but one store from which the joy-producing seed of the Spirit can be procured. Thanks be unto God, that store is inexhaustible and free; whosoever will may come. And "He who ministereth seed" is the gracious and compassionate Saviour, who warns you to flee from the wrath which is to come, to take refuge in his mercy by a true faith in him—seeking, in humble contrite prayer, for his Holy Spirit—asking, that you may receive.

Thus believing, asking, and receiving, being rescued from self and from sin, and furnished with the good seed of heaven, may it be your unspeakable happiness to know experimentally that "he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

G. E. S.

THE GREEN PARROT.

"Look at our new bonnets, mamma! Are they not very pretty?" said Fanny Ellis, as one Sunday morning she and her sister Clara entered the drawing-room, fully attired for an excursion. "Are not these trimmings beautiful? And see—gloves, ribbons, everything to match." Mrs. Ellis having given her daughters' dresses their due meed of praise, Fanny continued: "How kind of uncle to give us the money with which we bought these things! There will be some nice people to meet us to-day, and we could not well have appeared without something new."

"I am sorry that uncle must so soon leave us," said Clara.

"And I am sorry, too," responded their uncle, who just then came into the room. "But I am glad, my dear young nieces, that you are coming to visit my ship before she sails, and that you are so nicely equipped for the party which I have invited to meet you. Where is your cousin Julia? I hope she is ready, for it is time to set out."

Cousin Julia, for whom he inquired, was the only child of his and Mrs. Ellis's sister, and had, not long before, been left in that lady's care while her parents went on business to France. This young girl had been religiously brought up, as her father and mother were devoted Christians. She felt the separation from them much, particularly as her aunt, Mrs. Ellis, though an amiable woman, was not under the influence of religious principle, but allowed her family to be much engrossed in the pursuits of the world, and did not say like Joshua, "As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord." Not only had Julia been instructed in scriptural truths, but God had been pleased to apply them by his Holy Spirit to her heart, and she found the society into which she was now thrown in many ways not congenial to her habits and feelings.

But we left her uncle inquiring for her; and just as he did so she joined the circle, dressed in her usual attire. "How is this, my little girl?" said captain L—. "Where is the new bonnet and other gear like your cousins'?"

"I did not buy any, uncle," Julia answered, colouring deeply.

"Not buy any! And why so, child?"

"Dear uncle, I was sure that you intended we should lay out your kind present just as we liked;" and she was still more confused.

"So I did, my dear; but I thought little girls always bought finery when they could. However, since you have not got a new bonnet, put on the old one: it is time to go."

"Dear uncle, and you also, aunt, pray excuse me; but I do not wish to go with you to-day."

This declaration occasioned general surprise. "Not go with us! not go on board uncle's ship—you who have never seen a man-of-war!" her cousins exclaimed.

"If it is because you have not prepared a new dress, Julia," said her aunt, "do not let that prevent you, for I think you are quite smart enough."

"No, aunt, that is not the reason."

"And what is?" said her uncle, impatiently. "Tell us at once, Julia."

Poor Julia again grew very red—the tears trembled in her eyes. She must answer the question; and the dread of appearing to condemn the conduct of her elders gave her much pain. This distress was, perhaps, a little heightened by the idea that her cousins would laugh at her. With a faltering voice she replied, "This is the sabbath-day, uncle, and God has commanded me to hallow it."

"Oh! how precise you are!" cried Fanny, laughing; but the captain said, "Don't look frightened, my little Julia. I think the better of you for your objection; but surely you could not have understood that there is a church just near the quay where my barge is to meet us. We are to attend service there before we go on board, and the drive to it from this place is not two miles; so I hope your objections are obviated."

Julia took courage from her uncle's kind manner, and said, "No, dear uncle, they are not, because of what is said of God's holy day in the Scriptures. Please to look at this," and she showed him the 13th verse of the 58th chapter of Isaiah, which he read aloud. "Indeed, dear uncle," she continued, "I should greatly like to see your ship, and to hear the band, and to enjoy your company; but I cannot after having read this verse; and I hope my aunt will allow me to spend the day with mamma's old friend, Mrs. White, who has invited me to go to her whenever I can."

"Certainly," said Mrs. Ellis. "I can have no objection to your associating with Mrs. White, as your mother approves of it, though she is quite out of our circle of acquaintances. They say she is a religious, good woman, and was once better off: but we are losing time."

"What a strange girl Julia is," said Mrs. Ellis, when she, her daughters, and captain L— were seated in the carriage.

"Well," replied the captain, who seemed unusually thoughtful, "it is interesting to see a young creature like her actuated by principle, and steadily giving up, even at the risk of being laughed at, what I am sure she would have enjoyed, just because she thinks it wrong."

"But is she not needlessly strict?" inquired Mrs. Ellis.

"I do not know, sister. I never before thought that anything but abstaining from work was necessary on the sabbath; but the verse that Julia showed me implied more. I have been thinking of it."

Fanny and Clara both laughed, and the former exclaimed, "Oh, uncle, is Julia converting you to her odd notions?"

Captain L— replied, with more seriousness of manner than they had often observed him use, "I wish some one would convert me to what is good—to that kind of religion which influences the temper and conduct. I have been watching Julia since I came here, and do believe that it is so with her."

This awakened a feeling of jealousy in the minds of captain L—'s other nieces, who had taken pains to obtain his approbation; and Fanny immediately replied, "Ah! uncle, the fact is, that when Julia heard you had invited the admiral's lady, she did not like coming without being fashionably dressed; and she had spent her money before she knew it."

"In what manner?" inquired Mrs. Ellis.

"I do not know, mamma," answered Clara. "I asked her, and she blushed; but said she would prefer not telling."

"And I," said Fanny, laughing, "know how this demure little body spent some of it. A friend of mine saw her in the fruit-shop buying grapes and peaches."

While these remarks were being made, the subject of them was accompanying her mother's old friend, Mrs. White, to church; and when the service was over, to visit the widow and children of a sailor—a family about whom they both felt great interest. This family had hitherto been supported by the needlework of the mother, who excelled in the art, and was assisted by her daughters; but a stroke of paralysis had lately deprived the poor woman of the use of her right arm; and what with the loss of her industry, and the expenses of her illness, they were reduced to great distress. This widow was one who loved and served God, and now bore the heavy trial he had seen fit to send in a manner which it was encouraging to other believers to witness, giving full credit to

the Lord's gracious assurance, that though "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby," Heb. xii. 11. Julia visited this afflicted family with Mrs. White whenever she could; and, as the reader has probably guessed, it was for their relief that she had laid out her uncle's present, having procured several articles of which the sick woman stood in need. Her visits were always hailed with delight by the whole family, not alone on account of the little she could do to assist them, but because of the sympathy and kindness of her manner. Even a small green parrot, or paroquet, which the sailor had brought home from one of his voyages to India, knew her, called her by name, and asked for sugar when she appeared. It was a beautiful little bird, and prized by the poor family, who had kept it for the father's sake when obliged to part with many useful things; but now their distress had become so great, that pretty Poll must be parted with also; and on the present occasion Julia was told by the young people, with tears, that they had heard of a purchaser, and it was likely to be sold to-morrow.

Julia had often wished for money enough to purchase Poll, and now felt quite sorry to think that she should not see him any more. After a day spent with her mother's friend, much in the same way that she was accustomed to pass the sabbath at her happy home, she returned to Mrs. Ellis's, where she found her cousins talking over their party, which, though they pronounced it delightful, seemed to have been, like most earthly pleasures, not unalloyed by disappointments.

On the following evening, when the ladies were together, captain L— came in. "Well, my nieces," he said, "I am to sail to-morrow, and have brought each of you a token of my affection. Strange tokens, perhaps, you may think them; but I trust you will value them for my sake." He then presented Fanny and Clara with a neat pocket Bible each, saying, "Promise me to read them every day. I have procured another for myself, which I mean to study diligently, with God's help. You look surprised; but the fact is, that, having seen much of mankind, I have for some time, as the result of my observations, come to the conclusion that the best and happiest people are those who, from the heart, believe the doctrines and live by the rule of God's word. My resolution to do the same—often made, and, alas! too often broken before—has been so strengthened by some occurrences this

morning, that I trust it will now be acted upon. I had once on board my ship a sailor, who was truly religious, and so consistent in his conduct, that, though laughed at by some, he was respected and loved by all. I sometimes talked to him about what were called his queer ways; and many things that he said to me about God's love in giving his Son to die for sinners sank more deeply into my mind that I was myself aware. Poor Jack! he fell fighting by my side; his last words were, 'Oh! sir, I beseech you, for Christ's sake, be reconciled to God'—words which, through the bustle of various scenes, I never could forget. Well, this morning, by what is called chance, I met with his widow and children—people that seem to be just like himself. The meeting powerfully strengthened old impressions, which some few things that you, Julia, said had revived in my mind. But you are expecting your keepsake, and you, too, will be surprised when you see it. Still I must give you notice, that, though you will be fond of it, it is rather a dangerous inmate—a terrible gossip and telltale; but here it is."

A servant brought in and laid upon the table a handsome new cage, containing a small green parrot. The girls gathered round it—Fanny and Clara in raptures with its beauty; but the moment it saw Julia, to the surprise of all it called out, "Pretty Miss Julia! give Poll sugar."

"I told you that Poll was a telltale," said the captain. "It was through him that I this morning discovered that the kind young lady who visited, and, to the best of her ability, relieved the widow and children of my faithful Jack the sailor, was my niece, Julia; that, instead of buying finery for yourself, you liked better to provide a comfortable garment for the needy, and had even been so extravagant as to purchase fruit to refresh the feverish lips of a poor sick woman. Do not look so distressed, child; there is nothing for you to be ashamed of."

"But there is much for us to be ashamed of," exclaimed Fanny and Clara, flinging their arms round Julia's neck. "Oh! how we wronged you! Yes, dear uncle, we will study your Bibles in the hope of becoming like Julia."

"Do so, my dears, and may God bless the study to you. For you, my little Julia, I would not have you to be proud; but you may feel thankful that your consistent adherence to the religion you profess has thus enhanced its value in the estimation of others; and you may pray that much good may arise from what were apparently trifling circumstances. Your

humble and grateful friends, to whom Poll belonged, are delighted that he has fallen into such hands, and often wished that they could beg your acceptance of him. I need hardly add, that I have taken steps which will insure their future comfort."

E. F. G.

ALWAYS HAPPY.

It is delightful to one who has himself felt the power of the word of God to read of instances of its saving efficacy upon others. Few things tend more to confirm us in the truth. Every believer must, by his life, speak more or less to the hearts of those around him: he is an "epistle read and known of all men." If professors of true religion would recollect that by their walk and conversation the world in a great measure judges of religion, surely it would lead them to be more solicitous to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things.

The writer trusts that this account of a living witness of the truth will not be uninteresting or unimproving.

My dear old friend's happy face is one of my earliest recollections. Never have I seen his bright countenance overcast. He was past the prime of life when I first knew him: he had then for many years been a faithful servant in our family; and though twenty years have passed since, and old age, with its infirmities, bowed down his form, the yet bright face and sparkling eye seem to say, "Always happy." Shall I tell you the secret of this? A long conversation we had together a short time ago explained it to me, and I gladly communicate it, with the prayer that some person may be aroused to the study of that blessed book, which is not only "profitable for doctrine," but "for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

John's attention to his spiritual state was first awakened by hearing those words of our Lord to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Like him to whom they were first spoken, he asked, "How can these things be?" but, like him also, his heart had become the subject of the Holy Spirit's mysterious workings, and he rested not till he was enabled to believe on him "that taketh away the sin of the world." He told me that the conflict was very severe, and that the sight he had of his corrupt state by nature almost caused him to despair. He frequently

used to shut himself up in an old unfrequented barn, and there in anguish of spirit cry out, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" His sorrow was at length turned into rejoicing. Christ revealed himself as the Saviour of sinners; and he could see how God was "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." He received the spirit of adoption, whereby he was able now, as a reconciled child, to hold communion with God as a Father. His heart was filled with love to him, and he rejoiced to show it, by yielding cheerful obedience to his commands. From that time the Bible has been his constant companion. His attendance on the means of grace is exemplary. He never causelessly is absent from the house of God. He can enter into the feelings of the psalmist when he exclaimed, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!"—"For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." The place of worship is at a distance from his cottage; but by leaving early, and taking his dinner with him, he always contrives to be there at both services. He says that on these blessed days he gets food upon which his soul feeds during the week. When I hear my old friend speak thus, I can say, "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee."

We may notice particularly here in passing, that a main instrument of our sanctification is the word of God. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth," said our blessed Lord. Why is it that persons who, we would hope, are Christians, are yet so downcast and inanimate, that the world might well doubt as to whether the religion they had embraced were able to make them happy? In general the reason is plain. Such persons rest upon past experiences. They act as though their idea was, that when the word has been applied by the Spirit, and the dead soul once quickened into life, then they might take their rest, nothing further being required. How different is the language of David! He says, "I will never forget thy precepts; for with them thou hast quickened me," *Psa. cxix. 93*. And again, "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way." The analogy between the natural and spiritual life is striking. One meal will not suffice for the nourishment and growth of the body; nor will once having tasted of the bread and water of life suffice to fit the soul for the enjoyment of the heavenly inheritance. We need a constant application to the life-giving stream—a daily renewal.

Thus my friend John finds the words of Jesus to be spirit and life. The name of Jesus is sweet to him. One evening, while sitting under his humble roof, I repeated the beautiful hymn commencing, "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds." He was delighted, and in his own simple manner began to speak from the abundance of his heart: "I always awake towards three o'clock in the morning with the name of Jesus on my tongue, and some thoughts of him. If other thoughts come first, I am sure something is wrong, and I give myself to prayer."

If every believer sought to begin each day thus, realizing the name of Jesus as a Saviour, there would be more close walking with God during the day. Dear reader, the Scripture is for present application. Jesus Christ, the bread of life, is to be the daily food of our souls. Read the sixth chapter of St. John, in which our blessed Saviour compares this bread to the manna in the wilderness: "This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.—He that eateth me, even he shall live by me.—The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." The subject of these pages feels this.

The last visit I paid him I asked him if he had ever read the "Pilgrim's Progress?" He replied he had not; for having had little time, and being but a poor scholar, he had almost entirely confined his reading to the Bible; and the more he read, the more he wished to read. And so we shall ever find it. David said, "The entrance of thy word giveth life;" and "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." The further we advance in our path heavenward, the more fully we shall find, that just in proportion as we have this light shall we be able to pass over the rough places in our way without stumbling.

My acquaintance with this truly Christian man has led me to think much on the believer's happy privilege of walking with God. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Let this be the test of professions: "Enoch walked with God." Imagine a disciple following in his steps; he awakes in the morning with thoughts of Jesus; believing in his name brings peace and joy: his first words may be such as David's were, "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning. O Lord, in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee." Conscious of his own weakness, he dare not take a step without having first implored the blessing and presence of his Father. He prays

not only to be kept from the evil of the world, but, feeling his responsibility for the use of every talent, he prays that with them he may glorify God. Perhaps, in the words of our beautiful hymn for the morning, he sings,—

“Direct, control, suggest this day
All I design, or do, or say;
That all my powers, with all their might,
In thy sole glory may unite.”

Beginning the day thus, he insures a Protector against all the various evils to which he must needs be exposed. He prays, “Order my steps in thy word; and let not any iniquity have dominion over me;” and he is heard. The promise is, “Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do.” By faith he rests upon the promises of Him who is able to perform. Thus the believer humbly and trustingly feeds upon the word, and goes from strength to strength. By the word he is quickened, by the word he is guided, and by the word he is changed and fitted for heaven. “Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.”

Dear reader, do you say, “Let me die the death of the righteous?” Then pray also, “Let me live the life of the righteous.” One will be consequent upon the other. If this be your desire, go, like the subject of these pages, and smite upon your breast, and cry, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” Or, if you cannot yet see your sinful state before God so clearly as you wish to do, take his word, the Bible, and read it carefully, and there, as in a mirror, if you pray to God to open your eyes that you may see, you will find your own character described just as it really is. You will see what it is that makes you often restless and uneasy—dissatisfied with yourself and with everything around you. Keep on reading and praying for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and then you shall find not only medicine for your every wound which sin has made in your soul, but also food just adapted for you, as you proceed from infancy to manhood in Christ. Like our dear friend, never let any other book, however good that book may be, prevent your attention to the book of God. Let this prayer be yours, “Let my heart be sound in thy statutes,” so shall you not be ashamed. You shall glorify your heavenly Father by your consistent walk and conversation on earth, and afterwards unite with the glorious company of the redeemed around the throne in the song, “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own

blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

M.

THE TALEBEARER.

"Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth."—Prov. xxvi. 20.

"WHAT! going out in this keen north-easterly wind, and you have been suffering so much with your cough, Hetty?" expostulated a mild-looking elderly gentlewoman, as her sister entered their little sitting parlour equipped for a walk.

"I want a few things from the draper's in the next street," the lady answered.

"But can't Betsey fetch them for you, or can't you wait till to-morrow?" pleaded the elder sister.

"No; Betsey never brings what I like, and I want them to-night. May be," she added, in a hesitating tone, "I shall make a call whilst I am out."

Miss Sparks looked up from her knitting with a glance of inquiry, and said quickly, "I hope, Hetty, you don't mean to call on Mrs. Collins."

"It is very probable I shall."

"I feared as much," said her sister, with an expression of deep concern. "Indeed I can't help suspecting that is your object in going. Now if you repeat to Mrs. Collins all the unkind remarks her sister-in-law made about her, you will vex me very much, and do, I am sure, a great deal of mischief."

"It is right that Mrs. Collins should hear of it; and it is only what is due from me as her friend to tell her. I thought to myself, when Mrs. Bowden was going on so, 'Now I'll just tell your husband's sister what you are saying of her.'"

"And what possible good can arise from making her acquainted with it? If you had had the moral courage to tell her to her face that it was ungenerous and ungrateful to make such observations, especially on a person who had rendered her important services, it would have been much better, I think, than to repeat the matter, and thus sow further seeds of strife between them."

"I shall do as I please, Nelly;" and Miss Hester bustled out of the room without deigning another word.

In the minds of some persons there is a decided propensity for strife-making, and they never seem so well pleased as when an opportunity occurs to exercise it. Such was the case with

Miss Hester Sparks; and in the present instance she practised self-deception so far as to suppose that she was only venting honest indignation, and performing an act of justice. "Oh, my dear Mrs. Collins," she exclaimed, as she drew her chair closer to that lady's fire, and shivered from the effects of the north-easterly wind she had so heroically braved, "my friendship for you has brought me out at the expense of a night of coughing; but I couldn't keep away, I was so indignant."

"Pray what's the matter, Miss Sparks?" her hostess inquired, with some impatience.

"Why, your brother's wife came in this evening just as sister and I were sitting down to tea, and she said so many unkind things of you, I could scarcely keep my seat; so I came off the moment she was gone, thinking it was right it should come to your ears, though Nelly was a little displeased with me about it."

"An ungrateful woman! Is it possible? and this after I have just done so much to serve them."

"Yes, she told us you paid the debt for which Mr. Bowden had been arrested; but then she spoke so sneeringly of you, and said you wanted to manage their business for them, and dictate how they were to spend their profits."

"Did she really say this?"

"She did, indeed, and a great deal more that I can't think of."

"Well, if I did advise my brother, I think, as I am so much older than he, I had a right to do so. But they may depend upon it it will be the last time I shall distress myself to help them. I am glad you have told me what they say of me."

"I didn't say that your brother said anything against you; it was only Mrs. Bowden," said her visitor, now beginning to fear that she had gone too far. "I should be sorry, my dear Mrs. Collins—"

"Oh, you have done quite right by telling me. Mr. Bowden takes his wife's part, right or wrong, and such black ingratitude ought to be punished. I have done with them, mark my words."

Miss Hester, having accomplished her errand, arose to depart. She did not, however, feel quite easy in contemplating the part she had performed. Mr. William Bowden was an honest, well-meaning man; but he had been unfortunate in his commercial transactions. His sister, who was a rich widow, had materially assisted him, by affording, on several

occasions, pecuniary aid; and she imagined, therefore, that she was entitled to interfere in his business matters, and give advice more freely in the domestic arrangements than his wife was disposed to submit to. Mrs. Bowden was just smarting under the effects of this interference when she injudiciously and ungenerously gave vent to her complaints at the house of the Misses Sparks, little suspecting that the information would be carried to her sister-in-law, and the consequent results.

Circumstances induced the two sisters to remove shortly after from the little country town in which they had spent the greater part of their lives, and reside in a distant city. As they had no connexions sufficiently binding to induce them to hold any correspondence with the inhabitants, their knowledge of what was passing there ceased. About five years subsequent, however, Miss Hester happened to meet with one of her former intimates, and she eagerly availed herself of this opportunity of gathering all the information she could concerning what had transpired in her absence.

Her companion was nothing loath to enter into the details. Mr. and Mrs. So-and-so had had additions to their family. Mr. A— had married Miss B—. Rival shops had been set up, and failures taken place. There were also a few tales of scandal; but these were communicated in a whisper, and with the addition of, "I won't vouch for the truth of this. I only repeat what I have heard. It is currently reported," etc.

"And what has become of my old friend, Mrs. Collins?" asked Miss Hester.

"Oh, she is dead."

"Dead!" and the speaker looked more concerned than her gossiping acquaintance expected from the indifferent manner in which the question had been addressed to her.

"Yes, she was found dead in her bed one morning; about five or six months ago."

"You shock me. And what," she asked, in a somewhat tremulous tone of voice, "what has become of the Bowdens? Do they still live at —?"

"Oh, I had nearly forgotten all that affair. Poor Mr. Bowden, you know, has a large family and a mismanaging wife, and he often got into difficulties. Well, Mrs. Collins did help them out of their scrapes a good many times; but at last she grew tired of it, and would not do any more for them. However, everybody thought that she would leave her brother her property when she died. He was much the younger of the two. He was, besides, her only near relative; so he had

good reason to expect it. But when her will was produced, all was made over to some fourth or fifth cousin of hers, who had never before been heard of."

"What a cruel thing!"

"Yes, everybody was indignant, and cried shame on her; but it was said she was set against her brother by some wicked person repeating something he or his wife said when they were a little displeased with the old lady's meddling in their affairs."

Poor Miss Hester fidgetted in her chair, and searched for her spectacles; indeed she was glad to do anything rather than meet the eye of her sister, who was present, or hazard a remark on the last piece of information.

"It was said, Miss Sparks," the guest resumed, "that it was you who did all the mischief by telling Mrs. Collins something that was said at your house."

"I! who dared to say it was I?" exclaimed the lady, whose anger was not in the least degree abated by the self-accusations she had already endured.

"Pray do not be angry, Miss Sparks," cried the visitor; "I did not say it was you. I never would believe you could do such a thing, and I defended you; but people would say it for all that."

As may be supposed, poor Miss Hester did not desire any further details; indeed, she soon after gave her visitor a hint that her presence was no longer desirable. She had, however, a more severe trial to meet in the just censures of her sister, and the upbraidings of her own conscience.

"I hope, Hetty," Miss Sparks quietly observed, when they were again alone—"I hope you have learned a profitable lesson from this day's experience. It is impossible to tell the extent of the evil you have done in this one instance alone by becoming a talebearer; but this we know, that poor Mrs. Collins's life was cut off whilst she was still indulging the bad feelings your information produced, and a necessitous family are deprived of that property to which they certainly had a first claim."

Miss Hester was not of a temper to endure reproof, however mild, with meekness; and though she well knew that her cause was indefensible, she made some attempt at vindication. Her sister, seeing that a reply would only fan the flame of anger, and create discord between themselves, prudently forebore to make it, and thus the matter dropped.

It is hoped that this lamentable display of a common vice

may be of some avail to restrain its exercise, by showing its baseness and its hurtful tendency. But it is obvious that the religion of the gospel, of which the sisters seem to have been profoundly ignorant, can alone oppose an effectual barrier to this sin as well as every other. The renewal of the heart by the Holy Spirit, through faith in Christ Jesus, imparts the principle of holy love, which manifests itself in "laying aside all malice and all evil-speaking."

A. M. S.

CONVERSION OF CHILDREN.

March 20, 1827.

You appear, my dear friend, to think very early piety too wonderful a thing to be true. It is wonderful; so wonderful, that, when David was contemplating the starry firmament, he was drawn for a moment from his meditation on the wonders he there beheld, by the still greater wonder of God's ordaining "strength out of the mouths of babes and sucklings," *Psa. viii. 1-4*. But David's wonder and yours were of a very different nature: he wondered, and adored. Jesus, too, that "man of sorrows," once "rejoiced in spirit," because God "had hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."* Even so, Lord Jesus; in thy rejoicing will I, too, rejoice. Let the world think me a fool, or an enthusiast, or beside myself, as they thought thee. The story of "Little Henry and his Bearer," to which I believe you allude, I have been assured by Miss — is every word of it true. Do not, then, bring upon yourself the dreadful sin of limiting the power of the Holy One of Israel. Jesus has said, "Suffer little children to come," *Mark x. 14*; and they will come if he calls them. As facts are the strongest of all proofs, bear with me a little longer, while I tell you briefly the history of a child, for the truth of which I can vouch.

I knew a little girl about sixteen years and a-half ago. She was much like other children—~~as~~ full of sin and vanity as ever she could hold; and her parents had not as yet taken much pains to talk to her about religion. So she went on in the way of her own evil heart, and thought herself a very good little girl, because she said her prayers every night and morning, and was not more passionate, wilful, and perverse than most of her young companions. The God of love did not think this

* *Luke x. 21*. This, though not the direct, is an inclusive meaning of the declaration.

sinful child too young to learn of Jesus. He so ordered it, about the time I am speaking of, when she was just seven years old, that she was led by a pious servant into some almshouses belonging to Rowland Hill, who had just been preaching at them. The servant and an aged woman entered into a long conversation together, to which the little girl listened, and wondered what could make them like to talk about such things. But at the close of it the old woman took the child affectionately by the hand, and said to her, "My dear child, make the Lord Jesus your friend now that you are so young; and when you come to be as old as I am, he'll never leave you nor forsake you." God the Spirit sent these simple words to the poor sinful child's heart. She walked home in silence by her nurse's side, thinking how she could get Jesus to be her friend. Then she remembered how often she had slighted this dear Saviour; how she had read of him in the Bible, and been wearied of the subject; how she had heard the minister preach Jesus, and wished the long dry sermon over; how she had said prayers to him without minding what she said; how she had passed days, weeks, and months without thinking of him; how she had loved her play, her books, and her toys, and her play-fellows—all, all better than Jesus. Then the Holy Spirit convinced her of sin. She saw that no one good thing dwelt in her, and that she deserved to be cast away from God for ever. Would Jesus love her now? Would he ever forgive her? She feared not; but she would try. She would make herself very good, and then, perhaps, Jesus would be her friend. But the more this little girl tried to be good, the more her naughty heart got the better of her, for she was trying in her own strength. She was led to give up trying in that way; and many long nights did she spend in praying, "with strong crying and tears," to Jesus, that he would teach her how to get her sins pardoned, and make her fit to have him for her friend. Let me mention it for the encouragement of those who seek Jesus, that he did not disdain to listen to the prayers of this little child. He put it into her heart to read the Bible, of which, though she understood not all, yet she gathered enough to give her some comfort. One day her attention was fixed on these words, "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," John i. 29. Now something that could take away sin was just what this little girl wanted, and she asked her father to tell her who this Lamb of God was. He explained the precious verse. But who can describe the raptures which filled the bosom of this little child

when made to comprehend that the "blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin?" 1 John i. 7. Now she fled to Jesus indeed. Now she knew that he had loved her, and given himself for her. Now the Spirit of God, who often chooseth the weak and foolish things of the world to confound the wise and mighty (1 Cor. i. 27), shed abroad the love of God in the heart (Rom. v. 5) of a weak and foolish child, and filled her with peace and joy in believing, Rom. xv. 13. She had no one to whom she could talk of these things. But she held sweet converse with her God and Father; and gladly would she have quitted this life to go and dwell with Jesus. Since then she has spent nearly seventeen years of mingled happiness and pain. But she has had Jesus for her friend; and he never has, and never will, forsake her, Heb. xiii. 5. She has forsaken him more than once for a season, and turned to follow the vain things of the world. But her Shepherd's eye has been over her in her wanderings, and he has never suffered her quite to depart from him. To this day her vain and treacherous heart is continually leading her to provoke her heavenly Friend. He visits her transgressions with the rod, and her iniquity with stripes; but he has sworn never to take his loving-kindness from her, nor to suffer his faithfulness to fail, Psa. lxxxix. 32, 33. She is constrained to acknowledge that, during all this time, she has never done one thing that could merit God's favour. Free grace, free mercy, are all her song. It is of the Lord's mercy she has not long ago been consumed, Lam. iii. 22. She is quite sure she could never have changed her own heart. No; God has begun the good work in her, and he must carry it on; and from first to last let glory be ascribed to him, and let her take shame and confusion to herself. At this moment she desires to live, if she may be made the means of converting one sinner to Jesus; but if not, she would rather "depart and be with Christ, which is far better." She is far from despising earthly blessings. Every morsel she puts into her mouth, the very air she breathes, is made sweet and refreshing by the loving hand that sends it. Once there was a curse on all her earthly blessings. But now "Christ hath redeemed her from the curse of the law, being made a curse for her," Gal. iii. 13. She would give it as her living experience, and leave it when she goes hence as her dying testimony, that there is nothing worth living for except to know Him, and see others come to him, and wash their guilty souls in the blood of the Lamb. God has given her the blessing of seeing a happy change take place

in some of the dear companions of her childhood and youth. She waits upon him for the salvation of the rest ; and there is no one whom she longs after more ardently in the Lord than that dear and valued friend of her earliest days to whom this letter is addressed, and to whom she wishes every spiritual blessing that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost can bestow now and for evermore ! Amen, and amen.

MARY JANE GRAHAM.*

THE SOLDIER'S TESTAMENT.

IN one of the most fearfully critical moments of the political convulsions in France, two detachments of soldiers were seen preparing to storm a strong barricade, erected in one of the most populous districts of Paris. The one division belonged to the national, the other to the so-called mobile guard. This last corps was composed of very juvenile soldiers, so that it was common to see, in its ranks, boys of fourteen and fifteen, who, nevertheless, were often the most daringly courageous of the band. On this occasion the barricade was hotly contested, and deeds of desperate prowess were mutually performed by opponents, who, alas ! ought to have regarded each other as members of one family. Repeatedly had the barricade been fiercely assailed, and as often successfully defended, when, at the moment of the hottest conflict, two individuals rushed out from the ranks of their comrades, and, heedless of the shower of balls with which they were greeted, succeeded in reaching the summit of the barricade ; their companions hurried to their support, and the object of contest was taken. But the last shot fired by the retreating enemy was commissioned to enter the breast of one of the bold leaders, who fell, mortally wounded, into the arms of his brother assailant (one of the "garde mobile"), whose boyish frame could scarcely sustain the weight of the more robust but not more valiant national guardsman with whom he had fought, side by side, in emulative contest.

"I am dying," gasped the garde nationale, "I am dying ; but—open my knapsack—you will find there a little book—it is a Testament—take and read it, and pray God that you may do so with his blessing."

The wounded soldier expired, and the youthful survivor took possession of his legacy.

About a year subsequent to this event, a pious man, tra-

* Life by Rev. Charles Bridges.

velling on business, entered an inn at a considerable distance from Paris. To his no small surprise he observed in the chamber inhabited by the landlord a New Testament, which bore evident marks of being diligently perused.

"What! you read the Bible!" exclaimed he to the host, in a tone of mingled pleasure and astonishment.

"Yes, sir, and with great benefit."

"God be praised!" rejoined the traveller; "it was not so in former days."

"Yes, God be praised," re-echoed the host, "for to Him, in very truth, the praise belongs, as you will yourself acknowledge when I tell you how all this has been brought about;" and he forthwith related as follows:—

"One of my nephews, whom I had taken into my family after the death of his parents, early displayed such a vicious disposition that I felt compelled, for my own peace of mind, to bind him, when thirteen years old, to a tradesman in Paris, who I knew to be not only a conscientious, but strictly observant master, and on whose watchfulness and unrelaxing discipline I rested my last hope for the rescue of my unhappy nephew from utter destruction. But I soon learned that Paul had contrived to outwit even him, and had made his escape from his house with such consummate address, that not the smallest trace of him could be discovered. This intelligence naturally grieved me much, and I remained long in daily dread of hearing of him through the police, for I had little doubt of his soon committing some act which would bring him into the hands of justice.

"It is now about six months that one day the Paris diligence stopped at my door, and to my no small amazement I saw my truant nephew step out of it. I could not help shuddering on recognising him, and hastily exclaimed, 'What is the meaning of this bold intrusion? After the manner you have behaved, how dare you come hither to bring disgrace on your family?'

"Paul looked up in my face with a calm though melancholy smile, and pointing to the uniform of the garde mobile, which he still wore, said modestly, 'Believe me, uncle, I have not disgraced the division of the army in which I have served, and can produce satisfactory testimonials to that effect. I am now on leave solely on account of bad health, and can assure you my character as a soldier is not a bad one. As to my former conduct, no one can reflect upon it with greater detestation than I myself do.'

“ ‘All very fine talking,’ interrupted I, with incredulous impatience ; ‘ your illness is, doubtless, the result of intemperance ; your pockets are empty, and so you find it convenient to palm yourself on me, until you can retrieve health and purse, when you will, doubtless, begin a new score of misdeeds.’ ”

“ Paul hung down his head as I thus spoke, and then replied, in a low voice, that he had indeed feared I should be harder to convince than others had been, ‘ and yet, uncle,’ he continued, ‘ I am indeed changed. This is neither the time nor the place to enter into details ; but though it is true I now come to you seeking refuge and help, I well know it would be labour lost to try to purchase your benefits by hypocritical professions. All I now ask of you is to believe I am no longer the daring offender you once knew, and let time tell the rest.’ ” ‘ So be it,’ retorted I, not in the most friendly tone, and taking the poor boy by the arm, I led him into my house.

“ From the very first hour I could not conceal from myself that Paul was undoubtedly changed, and that essentially to his advantage. So far from rodomontading over his exploits, it was not without difficulty that I could draw from him any particulars of his military career ; and yet my questions elicited many a trait of daring courage, while all was told with modest reserve and an evident desire to extol his comrades above himself.

“ But the evening was destined to surprise me most of all. I had put up a bed for him in my own room, and before lying down he asked my permission to say his evening prayer.

“ ‘ Your evening prayer,’ echoed I, with a loud laugh, (for I was then a scorner of all religion, a regular heathen ;) ‘ the prayer of a garde mobile, or rather of a Parisian street jackanapes commonly called *un enfant de Paris*, must be something worth hearing, and so, prithee, boy, make haste, and give us thy prayer to the best advantage.’ ” I spoke bitterly, for I felt indignant at the part I supposed him to be acting ; but Paul looked at me more in sorrow than in anger, as he replied, with deep earnestness, ‘ Do not, I entreat you, dear uncle, make a jest of this matter. There is no need for me to speak aloud when I pour out my heart before God ; and soon, I trust, you will judge differently, not only of me, but of prayer, and learn by your own experience that it is no mere matter of form.’ ”

“ From this time forth I watched my nephew most narrowly, and that with much still remaining suspicion, for I could not banish from my mind the idea, that some sly design or unworthy motive lay at the root of his religious

profession. Ere long, however, I was compelled to acknowledge the injustice of this judgment.

"Paul's state of health grew daily worse, and the pulmonary affection, which had been the cause of his leaving the army, made such rapid progress as to excite the most serious apprehensions of even a speedy termination of his life. In moments of intense suffering, which were, indeed, of frequent occurrence, he would clasp his hands, and with an upward look of filial submission, murmur out, 'Have pity, O my Father, and help me; yet not my will but thine be done!' or, 'Precious Saviour, I know and am sure that all things must work together for good to them who love thee.'

"But what most of all affected me was his unchanging meekness and contentment. He was satisfied with every arrangement, and grateful for the most trifling attention to his comfort, so that we were all struck with it; and I one day observed to my wife, that Paul's change of character was the most extraordinary thing I had ever met with; more especially the manner in which he spoke of God's goodness towards him, at the very time he was enduring such agony of body, and anticipating death, filled me, I said, with astonishment.

"'True,' replied my wife, 'but I'll tell you a secret which accounts for it—Paul is a Christian, a true Christian.'

"'What do you mean by that?' retorted I; 'neither you nor I are heathens, I hope.'

"'Ah! my dear husband,' replied she, 'not quite heathens, perhaps; and yet, not real Christians. For, I put it to yourself, has God been hitherto the chief subject of our thoughts; or his law the rule of our actions? We scarcely knew the name of Jesus formerly; or, at all events, when we did pronounce it, no sense of benefit derived from him, or dependence on him for salvation, accompanied the word. But in my conversation with Paul I have learned things which constitute my deepest joy.'

"'In your intercourse with Paul you have learned new things! and, pray, what are they?'

"'Listen,' said she. 'Some little time ago, as I was one day trying to prop up the poor boy, in one of his sad fits of suffocation, a little book fell out from beneath his pillow; I afterwards picked it up from the floor, and saw it was a New Testament, of which I had indeed heard, but had never before seen one. The following day I mentioned my discovery to Paul. He then related to me that a soldier, who had been mortally wounded close beside him, had given him this book,

and expired immediately afterwards. That the dying man had bade him read it, that he had done so, and that this legacy had proved to him the treasure of all treasures, the source of his change of character, his peace and his joy.

“Every day since, when he and I have been alone, Paul has looked out passages of the Testament for me to read to him; and he has given me such plain and simple explanations of what I did not understand that I soon began to believe and to love the great good news, that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Paul is anxious to speak to you also of these things, but he is afraid; and, indeed, the poor boy blames himself much for this coward fear, which he calls treachery towards his Saviour, and is constantly praying that he may be strengthened to confess HIM, not only before you, but before the whole world.”

“This communication of my wife’s,” said the landlord, with deep feeling, “made a great impression on me. I went oftener than before to my nephew’s sick-bed, and, blessed be God, he soon began to tell me also of the gospel of Christ; and God, who is rich in mercy, bestowed his effectual blessing on Paul’s instructions, so that not only my wife, my son and daughter, but my own hardened self, received the truth, and are able to testify, as the Samaritans did of old, ‘Now we believe, not because of his saying;—for we ourselves know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.’”

“Paul is no longer among us,” continued the host, with a trembling voice; “the Lord has called him home. But,” said he, as he laid his hand on the New Testament, which had first attracted the traveller’s attention, “this is the dumb, and yet most eloquent witness of the immeasurable goodness of God, and the instrument of conveying that goodness to us. From this precious volume, read with attention and prayer, we have learned the testimony of God concerning his Son, and the written word being engraven in our hearts by the power of the Spirit, has become to us the source of unvarying peace, and of a calm happiness, for which we have cause to bless God both in time and eternity.”

I HOPE TO BE A CHRISTIAN.

You do? Why, then, do you not seek to be a Christian? God has ordained means in order to this end; are you using the means? “Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall

find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."—"Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye search for me with all your heart." Are you seeking for God with all your heart? No man ever yet escaped from the thralldom of sin and Satan, who did not earnestly struggle to be free. The Bible contains no promises to those who are folding their arms in sin.

You hope to be a Christian? Why, then, do you not give up your sins, renounce the world as your portion, and cheerfully surrender yourself to Him who is the way, the truth, and the life? He is ready and willing to receive you. He gave his life a ransom for sinners; he purchased the gift of the Spirit to renew and sanctify the soul; he has filled his revealed word with invitations and encouragements to seek his grace. But you still refuse his promised grace, shut your heart against his entrance, and continue to pursue the world, and to indulge your sins. How, then, can you hope to be a Christian?

You hope to be a Christian? When? Not now. You are too busy, or have something in view which must first be accomplished, or are so indisposed to give yourself to the work, that this is not felt to be the "convenient season." After a while, when you have accumulated a fortune, or passed the period when you can partake in the world's pleasures, or on a dying bed, you hope to be a Christian. "Go thy way for this time," is the answer you give to every appeal which comes home to your heart and conscience. But God's commands and promises are for the present. He gives no encouragement to wait for a future season. You have no assurance of any season beyond the present. Life is uncertain. Before the anticipated time comes you may be in eternity. The gracious Spirit may for ever leave you. A death-bed is no place for doing the great neglected work of life: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

You hope to be a Christian? So multitudes of others, who were living in sin, have hoped; but where are they now? Long ago have they been cut down as cumberers of the ground. Their day of grace and day of life have closed. They lived without Christ, and they died without him; and now are bewailing themselves that they trifled away their precious time on earth, in the delusive hope that some day or other they would be Christians. That day never came to them, and never will come. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended," and their souls are not saved.

A SINGULAR MISSIONARY.

GOD is rich in means, and in his wisdom knows how to raise up instruments of every sort to accomplish his designs of mercy and of love towards sinners.

In the stormy years from 1813 to 1815, in which the north of Europe repelled with such energy the aggressions of the French empire, a company of Russian soldiers arrived in a village of the Wirtemburghers, and remained there some time. There, as elsewhere, the fear which those strangers inspired was great. Meetings for mutual edification were accustomed to be held in the village in a house where a Russian was quartered. The members of the society met at the usual hour; but the presence of the soldier rendered them apprehensive and undecided. They doubted if they should dare to hold their meeting before him. Nevertheless, looking up to the Lord, they commenced. Scarcely had the Russian remarked for what purpose they had assembled than he seated himself near them, with folded hands, and testified by his entire manner his interest and delight. The thankfulness of the little band can be more easily imagined than described. Their fear of the Russian disappeared. Their meeting was more blessed than ordinary, and they separated each with a joyful heart. The Russian, although he did not understand a word of German, derived so much benefit in his feelings from that hour for prayer and edification, that, when time permitted, he never failed to join them.

But, as the soldiers were to remain for a still considerable time in that place, the Russian was obliged to quit the quarter which had become so dear to him, and was billeted in the house of a man hostile to the members of the society. The Russian well remembered the hour of the meeting; and when it approached informed his host that he must go out, and that he wished to have supper as soon as possible. The supper was served up, and the Russian sat down to table. Scarcely had he begun to eat when the hour for the meeting struck. To start hastily from the table, and to get ready for setting out, was the work of but a moment. Meanwhile his new hosts knew not what to think of it. They feared that the soldier, disliking his entertainment, was going to accuse them to his officers. They were still harassed with this idea, when the soldier returned, and took his host by the arm, saying, "Come, peasant." The peasant submitted to this order with trembling heart, expecting to be maltreated. To his great

astonishment he was led, neither to the colonel nor to the mayor, but to a house well known to him, belonging to one of those who formed the meeting. There his steps lingered, for he would rather have gone anywhere else than into that detested house. But all resistance was vain. The order repeated, "Come, peasant, come," obliged him to obey. One may imagine the misery the peasant felt in that assembly. Nevertheless, remain he must, the Russian being seated at his side.

The brethren also, who knew his sentiments, were troubled at his presence. However, they opened their meeting with prayer, beseeching of the Lord to give them a lively impression of his presence, and to bless this hour for edification. The Lord, in his love and faithfulness, manifested himself to them in an extraordinary manner, far beyond what they had ventured to hope or ask.

. That which those who assisted foresaw not at the commencement of the meeting happened. The faithful and compassionate Saviour, who wishes not that any sheep should perish, had reserved that hour to realize in favour of the peasant those words, "Jesus receiveth sinners," and to work a miracle of love with regard to that enemy of his word. He had entered into the assembly with a spirit full of bitterness and gloom: he went out of it a humbled, repentant sinner. The word of God, delivered in simplicity, had subdued that stubborn heart, and made it sigh after grace and mercy. And the Friend of sinners thenceforward carried on his work in him, until he found that peace of God which nothing in the world can take away from him.

EARLY SPRING.

WINTER is past; the little bee resumes

Her share of sun and shade, and o'er the lea

Hums her first hymnings to the flowers' perfumes,

And wakes a sense of gratefulness in me:

The little daisy keeps its wonted pace,

Ere March by April gets disarm'd of snow;

A look of joy opes on its smiling face,

Turned to that Power that suffers it to blow.

Ah! pleasant time! as pleasing as you be,

One still more pleasing Hope reserves for me;

Where suns, unsetting, one long summer shine,

Flowers endless bloom, and winter ne'er destroys:

Oh may the good man's righteous end be mine,

That I may witness these unfading joys!

Clare.



PATIENT IN TRIBULATION.

"LET us look, Abigail, to the hills whence cometh our help," said Sampson Dale. "A gracious thing it is, my daughter, to have a song in our mouths, when we have an arrow in our hearts."

Affliction and sorrow, whether springing from the body or the mind, are oftentimes hard to bear; but say what we will of trouble, our heavenly Father can, and not unfrequently does, so sustain his servants in their trials, that they are enabled to rejoice in the midst of tribulation. It was so with Sampson Dale. Truly might it have been said that he was a man of sorrows; but God had given him faith in his holy word, and graciously bestowed upon him such an unfailing fountain of thankfulness for all his mercies, that he went on suffering and rejoicing.

We are not usually apt, under an outward appearance of comfort, to suspect the presence of deep inward affliction. A stranger might have entered the habitation of Sampson Dale, and taken his departure, after conversing with its inmates, with little demand on his sympathy; while, had he known, what a dark cloud was hanging over that dwelling—had he known the secret sorrow which was trying the hearts of both father and daughter—he would have pitied them deeply.

Sampson had been long sitting in his arm chair, with his

leg supported by a leg-rest. He had spread a silk handkerchief over his knee, so that he hardly looked like an invalid. What with his cheerful conversation and general appearance, most people would have supposed him blithe at heart; but not so his daughter Abigail. The very cheerfulness of her father added to her gloom, for she well knew that he was making an effort for her sake. The heart knoweth its own bitterness; and bitter, indeed, was the heart of Abigail.

It had pleased God to afflict Sampson Dale. A wound which accidentally he had received in the leg had grown worse and worse. Indeed, so serious a case had it become, that a consultation of surgeons was about to take place to decide whether or not the leg should be amputated. It was at the time when the surgeons were expected that Sampson, with a view of cheering the depressed heart of his daughter, made the remark mentioned above.

Abigail, who had lost her mother, being an only child, was beloved by her father as the apple of his eye; and this affection was returned with full interest by the tender-hearted girl. The bare possibility of her father having to sustain so heavy a calamity as the loss of a limb, weighed down her loving spirit. Sampson, as may be supposed, had enough to endure, yet did he stoutly battle with his trial, and strive to sustain his daughter.

"God is the same almighty helper yesterday, to-day, and for ever," said Sampson, cheerfully. "How good and how merciful he was to his people of old times. 'In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.' Hardly do we sufficiently remember that sunbeams and sorrows come from the same quarter. Holy Job considered this: 'Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?' " ii. 10.

Few were the words of Abigail; for though the texts quoted by her father were very suitable to their situation, her heart was too full of grief to receive the consolation he was anxious to impart. A ring at the bell announced the arrival of the consulting surgeons. Sampson sat collected; but the sudden start of poor Abigail and her pale face told the tale of her inward sorrow.

There is much difference in the spirit of medical men in their visits, and in the manner in which they express the

opinion they entertain. Some consult their patient's wishes in all things, and are extremely kind; but these seldom create an impression favourable to their ability. Others are so off hand and decided, that a patient scarcely dares to open his lips in their presence. These frequently obtain, whether deservedly or not, the reputation of being clever. It is, however, very possible to be kind without weak compliance, and self-possessed without churlishness, as is illustrated by the temper and demeanour of many professors of the healing art.

The family doctor of Sampson Dale was better known for his attention and caution than for any remarkable exploits he had performed. His being a man of piety was with Sampson a great recommendation. He had judged the consultation to be expedient, and, therefore, it took place; and an unfavourable opinion being unanimously pronounced, a day was fixed, and agreed on by Sampson for the painful operation.

"It must come off," said one of the consulting surgeons to Abigail, with that thoughtless indifference in which some medical men indulge. A reproving glance from the other two professionals was given, for Abigail turned ashy pale, and sank into a chair.

"We are not our own, Abigail," said Sampson Dale, when left by themselves, but "bought with a price. If we can trust Him who has 'purchased us with his own blood' with our immortal souls, surely we may trust him with our poor, perishable bodies."

"But," replied the distressed daughter, "you are suffering, deeply suffering, I know you are, though you speak so calmly and so cheerfully. You never murmur, and that tries me the more. I think if you complained I should bear this affliction better."

Fixing his eyes affectionately on Abigail, Sampson repeated impressively the text, "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken," Isa. liii. 7, 8.

Abigail, who felt gently reproved, kept gazing awhile on her father with visible love and veneration. "Yes, father," said she, in allusion to the text quoted; "but he was more than man."

"True, my dear Abigail," said Sampson, taking the hand of his daughter; "but he strengthens all who trust in him." Then, turning over the leaves of his Bible, he read with an unfaltering voice the words, "'Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain by the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented,' Heb. xi. 36, 37. Thus was it with the saints of the Lord, of whom the world was not worthy. He who gave them strength, will strengthen your father."

Faith is often made a means of producing its kind; and by degrees the strong faith of Sampson Dale, in God's goodness, began to have much influence on his daughter, so that her mind was greatly strengthened. The precious promises of God, and a knowledge of his dealings with the servants of old, were as meat and drink to Sampson Dale: suffer he did, but he still went on suffering and rejoicing.

Faith is not the mere assent to an opinion lightly entertained, but a deep conviction of Divine truth given by God himself, often after doubts and fears, and wrestlings and discomfitings. As it is God's gift, so none but God can sustain its life in the soul. Sampson, though not, like his namesake of old, favoured with great bodily strength, was yet through grace a strong man, for his faith, though sorely tried, failed not. He felt in his distressing situation, for he was a man; but by God's help he conquered, for he was a Christian man.

The day of trial came, and Sampson appeared at the breakfast table somewhat pale, but full of unbroken courage. That day he had clothed himself in mail, for he had risen early, and given himself with more than his wonted devotedness to prayer. He who goes into the world without prayer, is like a soldier going unarmed to the battle.

The prayer of faith the soul sustains
In danger, darkness, grief, and chains;
Exulting bids the saint expire,
Unconquer'd by the fiercest ire
Of flaming faggot and of raging fire.

"Abigail, dear," said Sampson, "I have been thinking what mistakes we make in great afflictions, when we keep brooding on our own weakness, instead of trusting on the sustaining power and grace of our heavenly Father. 'He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind,' Isa. xxvii. 8.

Abigail's lips trembled,² but they gave no sound, and Sampson continued his remarks:—

"The love of God in Christ so strengthens me, that I think I could say, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me,'" Psal. xxiii. 4.

Abigail still kept looking at her father, lovingly, but silently, for her heart was full.

"What a precious promise is that," said Sampson, "'Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me,' Psal. l. 15. We must both call to-day, and we shall not call in vain. If the surgeons use chloroform, Abigail, I shall feel no pain; and if they do not, my pains, though sharp, will be short. How good is God to me in letting this affliction fall on me, and not on my daughter."

This proof of her father's affection was more than Abigail could bear. Rising from her seat, she flung her arms with emotion round his neck, and sobbed aloud. While Sampson was ministering to his afflicted child, the doctors arrived at the door.

Abigail! Abigail! what can have so suddenly driven away sorrow from thy heart, and lit up thy face with smiles? Thine eyes are sparkling with joy, and thy mouth is filled with thanksgiving.

On unbandaging Sampson Dale's leg, the doctors unexpectedly discovered such a change for the better, that they doubted not of a complete cure.* Amputation was quite out of the question. Even the surgeon who had before manifested such thoughtless indifference to the loss of the leg, felt the most confidence in its preservation.

As Sampson Dale had not been unduly depressed by his expected trial, neither was he unreasonably excited by his unexpected deliverance. As usual, he had in his mouth and his heart a song of thanksgiving. "Shame upon us," said he, "if ever we again call in question the love of God, or his covenant mercy in our Saviour Jesus Christ. 'The Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him,'" Psal. xxxiv. 8.

And here Sampson broke out into singing, in which he was heartily joined by his delighted daughter:—

"Of his deliverance will I boast,
Till all that are distrest
From my example comfort take,
And soothe their griefs to rest."

That day was a day of joy and peace, and that night was a night of grateful thanksgiving in the habitation of Sampson Dale, for gloom had departed, and sorrow and sighing had fled away. "If it be God's will," said Sampson, "that we should suffer, let us look to him, for then shall we be enabled to go on suffering; and yet rejoicing."

G. M.

"EVEN CHRIST PLEASSED NOT HIMSELF."

ROMANS XV. 3.

WE often hear men say, "I will please myself;" and when it is not said in so many words, we see that their sole care is for their own gratification or advantage. That is quite true of mankind in general, which the apostle Paul said of some particular individuals, "All seek their own." Too frequently when we have seen men seeking the pleasure or benefit of others, a little further acquaintance with them and their purposes has shown us that all the time they were promoting only or chiefly their own ends. This is the spirit of selfishness.

Selfishness is the result of sin. Man was not made selfish. It is the perversion of that principle of self-love, which God himself implanted in the soul, and which he has sanctioned as right, by making it the standard of our love to our neighbour.

There is more or less of this spirit of selfishness in every heart; and yet there is a very general feeling that it is wrong. Put it to almost any person of education and thought, and he will admit that it is so. Let such a man feel that he is detected in the indulgence of selfishness, and he is wounded and ashamed. The forms of polite society are all expressions of the persuasion that it is unamiable, but still beneath the thin disguise of what is called good breeding the thing itself remains.

There is only one power which can grapple successfully with selfishness, and that is the power of true religion. The gospel condemns it, points out its manifold evils; supplies motives for its repression; and engages all who by God's grace receive the truth as it is in Jesus, not only in the performance of services which have immediate relation to God, but also in works of active self-denying benevolence for men.

One of the most powerful motives to such benevolence is to be found in the example of Christ. The apostle Paul reminds us (Rom. xv. 3) that "even Christ pleased not himself," and he mentions it as a reason why "they that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please them-

selves;" and why every one of us should "please his neighbour for his good to edification."

Christ had power to have "pleased himself," for he was God; but he voluntarily left his throne in heaven; assumed our nature; endured poverty, weariness, and reproach; submitted to sufferings of the most appalling character; and at last died the ignominious death of the cross. In all this "he pleased not himself."

In that spirit of self-denial which he thus displayed, Christ is an example to us.

We do not stand alone. We are bound to our fellow-creatures by various ties, some of them natural, and others voluntarily formed. We are members of families, members of churches, citizens. We have no right to say, I will occupy myself solely with my own welfare, and leave others to attend to theirs; neither are we to regard others as simply accessory to our own purposes, and just to ask how far we can render them subservient to the promotion of our own interests. We are rather to inquire what we can do to bless them. "Let every one of you please his neighbour for his good to edification." We are to gain our neighbour's affection that we may promote his good. The question was once asked of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Who is my neighbour?" And the answer he gave implied that every man is our neighbour whom we can do anything to serve; for a benevolent Samaritan was commended as the neighbour of him who fell among thieves, though he whom he succoured was a Jew.

Thy neighbour? It is he whom thou
Hast power to aid and bless;
Whose aching head and burning brow
Thy soothing hand may press.

Where'er thou meet'st a human form
Less favour'd than thine own,
Remember 'tis thy neighbour worm,
Thy brother or thy son.

Oh pass not heedless, pass not on,
Perhaps thou canst redeem
The breaking heart from misery,
Go share thy lot with him.

The duties of active benevolence are often irksome. It is not a pleasant or an easy thing to bear with the infirmities of others, especially if we think that they ought to have been better informed, or that they were fully able to restrain those displays of temper which try us. We sometimes feel as

though we could gladly shrink from the task of visiting the beds of the sick and the dying, especially when the disease by which they are suffering is infectious or loathsome. We should enjoy far more the comforts of our own fireside and the pleasant book than the labours of the sabbath school. We think sometimes what conveniences that substance would procure for us, which we are called upon to expend in works of charity. We are not to take shelter from these obligations under the plea, "I have no delight in them, and therefore I will leave them to those who have." That were really to assume that pleasure is the standard of duty, and that nothing is binding upon us unless we like it. Nothing could be more mistaken and wrong. The question must be, "Is it in my power to this?" and if it be, though we do find it irksome we ought to do it. As we think of men and women, who have been distinguished in different walks of philanthropy, and feel the greatness of the contrast between them and ourselves, we are apt to excuse ourselves by the reflection, "Oh! they had a pleasure in what they did." But if we had a record of their feelings with regard to those very duties, we are persuaded it would be found that a Howard, and a Sarah Martin, and a Caroline Fry had many a struggle ere the habit of benevolent effort became so firmly fixed that it was a second nature and a joy. We need not wonder that we often find a heavy cross in the work which our Master has given us to do, since he, in doing his work, "pleased not himself."

There is a power by which the irksomeness of duty may be overcome. That beautiful example was set us that we might emulate it. He "pleased not himself," that we might learn from him "not to please ourselves." It is as, with renewed hearts and affectionate confidence in Christ, we look at that example, and admire it, that we are led to copy it. But we are to remember, too, that he "pleased not himself," that we might have salvation. He thus secured a title to our everlasting gratitude. And this is how he expects us—not to repay our debt, for that were impossible—but to acknowledge it. We may feel sometimes, as we look on those for whom our kindly offices are demanded, that for their sakes alone we are unwilling to render them. But when, as true believers in him, we hear the voice of Christ saying, "Bear with those infirmities for me; visit that sick bed for me; train up those children for me; relieve for me that poor and lonely widow;" we feel that it would be the basest ingratitude to refuse. Let but the love of Christ be enthroned as the predominant prin-

ciple in our hearts, and there is no duty we owe to him from which we shall be disposed to shrink. The noblest and most self-denying works of philanthropy the world has ever seen have been performed beneath the mighty impulse of the love of Christ.

And these works, whilst they require for their performance the repression of selfishness, may be urged by an appeal to a true and enlightened self-love. Christ "endured the cross, despising the shame, for the joy that was set before him." And there is no cross which we have to bear for which there is not a corresponding joy. There is a pleasure in self-forgetfulness. As the selfish man is punished by the contraction of mind which is produced by his selfishness, so the truly benevolent is rewarded by an enlargement of soul and by the most sublime satisfaction. Every act of intelligent and benevolent self-denial, too, strengthens the character. The following remark, in reference to intellectual pursuits, may be well applied to such duties as have just been inculcated. "Season your studies," says the writer, "with hard and knotty inquiries, and let the mind be daily employed on some subjects from which it is averse. Such buds, if they do not improve the blossom of the budding tree, will prop and strengthen the stem." That Christian secures the greatest strength of character by whom there is most exemplified the spirit of self-denial, and such strength is in itself a blessing. In many ways besides it is true that—

"The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath; it is twice blessed,
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes."

And then, beyond this present scene, Christ has represented himself as saying from the judgment throne of the universe, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." S. G.

GOOD NEWS.

OLD William Leary and his wife were seated by their evening fire. It did not now, as in former times, rise from a hearth heaped with turf and bog-wood, till the cabin from the floor to the rafters was illumined by the cheerful flame, neither was that hearth, as heretofore, surrounded by a circle of merry faces. The dingy light gleamed only upon the worn features of the old couple who bent over it, conversing sorrowfully in

their native Irish tongue of the change which the last few years had made in their once happy home. "William, darling," said the wife, "are we not something like the two ravens on the hill-top yonder, that sit croaking upon the bough of the old tree because their nest was robbed, and their young ones scattered to the four winds, and they left alone in the world?"

The old man took the pipe from his mouth, shook the ashes out of it, and quietly answered, "Well, I don't think we are entirely like them, Aileen, dear. We have the nest still to take shelter in; and though our fine boys and girls are, as you say, scattered to the four winds, one good son is left us yet, praise be to Him who has spared us this much. We have more than we deserve, and it is not these things that are troubling me, Nelly."

"And what else is, William? What trouble can be on your heart that is so great as to see ourselves, who were once as comfortable as any people in the parish, with a welcome and a supper ready for every stranger that came to our door, now sad and sorrowful, with scarcely enough for ourselves? And if we have one boy left, oh! is it not misery to see him wearing himself out with hard labour, trying to keep the life in us; and the prospect before us that he must go across the seas after the others, and we end our days in the poor-house?"

"Well, bad as the poor-house is by all accounts of it, Nelly, we might have to go to a worse place," he answered, with a shudder.

"Where is that?" she inquired, looking frightened.

"I will tell you, Nelly. Do you remember the man we gave a night's lodging to in the winter, who read the Irish book for us?"

"I do, and fine reading it was."

"Yes, it was fine, for it was, as he told us, the word of the great God. Not a Protestant book, for I would not listen to one of that sort after all that the priest said against them, but just as much for the Catholics. Well, Nelly, there were awful things in that book, that went through my heart like a two-edged sword, as the reader compared it to.* It said we were all sinners;† and it said that 'the wicked shall be turned into hell.‡' Now, Nelly, how am I to escape that?"

"You, William! as honest a man as—"

"That won't do, wife. The word of God said I was a sinner, and my own heart felt it was true."

* Heb. iv. 12.

† Rom. iii. 23.

‡ Ps. ix. 17.

"Couldn't the priest tell you all about it, my dear Will?"

"Yes, Aileen, the priest says he can forgive my sins if I pay him for it; but where is the money? Must we go to hell because we are poor? He has masses to get the souls of the dead out of purgatory, but who will pay him for masses to get my soul out? I can do nothing for myself; I cannot even walk to the holy well now and give my rounds there. I must soon die, and how is my soul to be saved?"

To this important inquiry, which evidently came from the old man's heart, his wife gave such answers only as proved her to be a "miserable comforter." At length, finding she could not satisfy him, she tried to turn the current of his thoughts by going to the cottage door, which she opened, and looking out said, "I wonder Dan is not come home; it is an hour past his time, and it will soon be quite dark. Ha! I see the figure of a man coming up the bohereen,* but it is not Dan. I do think it is like James Bourke, and 'tis long since he was here. Cheer up, William dear, for James is so pleasant, and always brings good news."

"What good news could he bring me?" said the old man sorrowfully. "Can he get me forgiveness for my sins, or gold to give those who say that they can?"

"He may be able to tell you about these things, my poor man; for pleasant and lively as James is, he has this long time been making his soul,† and went on two or three pilgrimages."

Just then the subject of this conversation entered, pronouncing the customary salutation, "God save all here," in a peculiarly serious tone, which was answered by a cordial shake of hands and "kindly welcome" from the old couple. The stranger took a seat at the hearth, on which Mrs. Leary heaped fresh turf, saying, "You shall have a good fire at any rate, James Bourke; it is all we have for you now except the welcome. My fine feather-bed that you used to sleep on is gone; and as for your supper, Ohone! that I should have nothing but—"

"Stop, Mrs. Leary; sure you don't think it's for things like them I come to you?"

"No, no, James; but what kept you so long away; and have you any news for us now? You always brought us news."

* Little road.

† An expression often applied by Irish Roman Catholics to very religious people.

"Well, may be I have; but tell me, does any thing ail William here? He don't look well." This inquiry led to a conversation in which poor Leary's troubles, both of a temporal and spiritual nature, were laid freely before their guest, who listened with an expression of deep sympathy, especially to the latter. "So, William," said he, "when the story had ended, 'you feel that you are a lost sinner, and you are fretting because you have no money to give the priest for absolution, or to say masses to get your soul out of purgatory?'"

"Just so, James."

"Well, I can feel for you, for I found out the same thing about myself long ago; and light-hearted as I might have seemed to you, the very same thought often came into my mind, 'What must I do to be saved?'"

"And what did you do, James?" anxiously inquired the old man.

"Everything I could, William. It was only one year ago, the 24th of last July, that day that is called the festival of St. Declan, that I went, with crowds of other foolish people, to Ardmore on the coast of the county Waterford, where St. Declan's well is, and St. Declan's stone also, which you have heard of. It is very large, and raised a little from the ground, resting upon a ledge of the rock. The story is that it floated across the sea from Rome, bringing on it a bell which the saint forgot there. Well, it is said that whoever passes under that stone, squeezing himself between it and the ground, will leave all his sins behind him, and come out perfectly free from them. This I did, and it was no easy matter to a bulky man like me; besides there was water there, and mud too; so I got wet and dirty, and so did others that went under it. We went to a public-house to dry ourselves, and to prevent cold we drank a little too much whisky, and then had a quarrel. Well, William, I don't remember any more till next morning, when I woke and found myself a prisoner in the police-barrack; the old sins pressing as heavy as ever upon my heart, and the new ones of rioting and drunkenness added to them, for you know I was always sober and well-behaved. Sorrowful enough I appeared before the magistrate, and instead of defending myself owned how wrong I had been. I was fined a small sum, but had nothing to pay it; when a gentleman who was in the court-house paid it for me, and took me away with him. He was an engineer, and offered me employment at some public work that he was carrying on some miles distant, so I agreed gladly, for he was a very pleasant gentleman. He used

often to talk friendly to me, and was kind to every one, and that made us ready to listen to whatever he said. One day he asked me all about my going under St. Declan's stone, and if I thought it had done me any good; and when I said no, he said, 'Well, Bourke, since St. Declan has not served you, I would advise you to try a remedy for sin which St. Peter recommends.' 'And where will I get St. Peter's advice, sir?' says I. 'Here, Bourke,' he answered, taking a book from his pocket, 'this is a letter written by St. Peter himself, and he tells you of a stone, not like that under which you squeezed yourself at Ardmore, but a living stone, which he assures us is chosen of God, and precious, by means of which you may offer to him a spiritual sacrifice that will surely be acceptable, and not like that foolish act of squeezing yourself through the rocks, as you feel it to be.'* Well, William Leary, I listened to that gentleman day after day, until I found—would you guess what?"

"What was it, James?"

"A Friend, a great and rich Friend, who saw me, like yourself, William, loaded with sins, and too poor to pay the ransom due for them, and paid it all himself."†

"Did he though?" cried Leary. "How very good! Then you need never enter purgatory, James."

"Ah, William, there is no such place. This good friend left a book in which everything that man need know about the future is written down, and not one word is there in it about purgatory. But there is a worse place, which people never can get out of, and into that every soul that is not bought with the great price I mentioned must be cast."

"Then I must go there," cried the old man clasping his hands, "for who would pay for me?"

"Listen to me, William," replied the visitor. "Your wife said that I always brought news. Well, I have brought good news this time, the best that ever you heard, if you will only attend to it, and believe it. Our God who, while we were yet sinners, loved us, sends you the very same message that comforted me; and the very same friend, even his own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, has redeemed your soul, as St. Peter tells us, not 'with corruptible things, such as silver and gold,' oh, no, William, 'but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.'‡ Here is God's own word, the very book that first made you feel yourself to be a sinner. I can read for you, praise be to Him who wills not

* 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.

† 1 Cor. vi. 20.

‡ 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

that any should perish, now He is able and willing to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him."

With hearts sincerely desirous of finding an answer to that momentous question, "What shall I do to be saved?" these simple peasants listened to the word of life; and that Spirit, whose office it is to enable such listeners to understand and believe the truth therein revealed, soon led them to see how utterly worthless are all means devised by man for obtaining the forgiveness of sin. Hour after hour wore away, and still they were not weary of hearing those "good tidings of great joy" once brought by an angel from heaven to the shepherds of Bethlehem. The old man did not even notice the protracted absence of his son, and it was long before the mother had an opportunity of remarking, "I wonder what can keep Dan! it is very late."

"I met him on my way here," said James Bourke, "and he requested I would tell you not to be uneasy. He was going on business to the master's house, and might have some delay."

This calmed all fear on Dan's account, and again their thoughts were directed to the subject of absorbing interest. "I see how it is, James," said Leary: "I have been just like a blind man, and God is opening my eyes, but they are very dim yet. Can you stay with us for some time, and read that blessed book for us every night?"

"I can for a short time, William. I have got work in the neighbourhood, and will lodge with you till the ship is ready in which I shall go to America."

"Then you are going there?"

"Yes, William. When once a man believes that sinners can be saved by the work of Christ alone, he can't be a Roman Catholic, for he can no longer trust to what St. Peter calls vain conversation received by tradition from our fathers. When we give up these things the priests, as you well know, are angry, and do all they can to persecute us, so I am going where every man can act according to his conscience."

"And if I am led on to give up everything that I do not find written down in God's word, as I do hope I shall be, what am I to do when the priests, and old neighbours, and all are against me? It is bad enough even as we are now," said old Leary.

"Listen to this fine verse, William, and remember it is spoken by Him who cannot lie. 'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will

with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.' " *

Just then a knock at the door announced the return of Dan; his mother opened it, and he entered. "Well, my boy," his father said, "James Bourke has been telling us good news, and you look as if you had good news also. I did not see such a smile upon your countenance this long time."

"You are right enough, father. I went to the Post-office this evening when work was over, and there I got a letter from brother Tim, and he, and Lawrence, and Nancy are doing well, and have a snug house near New York, and sent, with their dutiful love; money enough to take us all out to them, where they say you shall want nothing while you both live. I would not come home till I showed the bill to the master, who says it is all right, and will give us the money for it; so we can join them as soon as we like."

E. F. G.

THE DOUBLE RECONCILIATION

Nothing tells upon the human breast like that which has happened under our own eye, or is told us by one who has been witness to the things related. The facts here related were told by the daughter; and though years have passed since the mother's death, the result of the agony of those convictions, and the hope that it was the Holy Spirit himself working "repentance not to be repented of," drew forth a flood of mingled feelings, in which fear and hope struggled for the mastery.

On a day of fast-falling snow a woman called at ——— rectory to inquire if a servant were wanted. She was told it was not so, and was facing the driving snow to return, when she was invited to rest, and wait till the storm abated. The offer was gladly accepted, and it was soon evident that she was one of that large class of our fellow-creatures who feel themselves, as she expressed it, like "a sparrow alone on the housetops;" one to whom so small an act of common kindness was like a gleam of light in a dark day. Trouble and sorrow had been her portion, and she was anxiously seeking a home where, with employment suited to her years, she might eat the bread of industry, and dwell amongst those who would care for her soul. The simple story of her own troubles called forth no

energy of voice or manner; but being suddenly carried back to the state of destitution in which she was left at her mother's death, the mention of that event touched her soul, and, leaving her own tale of sorrow, she gave the following solemn and touching statement connected with it:—

“It happened that I was without a situation at the time my mother was attacked by the illness which carried her to the grave, and near her death she remarked that it was a mercy it was so ordered by a wise and gracious Providence. She suffered much from pain and poverty; but, oh, how light were these trials compared with the thought that she was about to face an offended Judge, with all her sins upon her head! She had heard of Jesus and his salvation; but, like the greater part of her fellow-creatures, she had refused to be saved. She had lived without God in the world, broken his holy laws, and trampled on his salvation. In alarm and distress of mind, she one day crawled from the bed she was with difficulty able to leave, and, throwing herself on her knees, she stretched out her arms in an agony of despair, crying, ‘Oh, if I had the whole world, how would I now give it for Jesus-Christ! but no, he will not hear me. Oh, that Jesus should come to die for sinners, and I refuse to be saved! I must perish with this load of sin. Oh, if I could now have Jesus for my Saviour!’

“In my ignorance I thought that, if she was at peace with all her neighbours, God would be at peace with her. I little knew then how dearly the pardon of sinners had been paid for, and that no man can go to the Father but by the precious blood of Christ. I said, ‘Mother, are you at peace with everybody?’ ‘With all but one,’ was her reply. ‘Widow J— once wronged me, and I never forgave her.’ I said, ‘Widow J— is a good woman, and I believe you were mistaken in thinking she had wronged you.’

“Days of restless, fearful agony passed on; I felt she must have help, and I was too ignorant to give it. I asked if I might call widow J— to speak to her. ‘Not her,’ she said. With difficulty, however, she consented; and the poor woman, knowing my mother's angry feelings toward her, was doubtful if she should be allowed to go. But it was the Lord himself who sent her there, for, through the precious word of life eternal brought by widow J—, the stony heart was brought to yield to the power of the gospel of Christ Jesus; and the hands that had been stretched forth in horror and despair, were lifted in earnest supplication and prayer to the Saviour of lost sinners. She had, indeed, seen herself in all the hatefulness

of her lost and ruined state ; she had writhed under the agony of the dread of the wages due to her sin ; what, therefore, must to her be the sight of such a Saviour, so full of tender mercy and compassion, that even at this eleventh hour his love and pity reached her ; granting her, through his blood, remission of her sins, clothing her poor trembling soul in the robe of his own perfect righteousness, sealing these gifts to her by the teaching of the blessed Spirit, and using, as the instrument of all this blessedness to her, a poor, weak, helpless servant of Christ—one, too, who was least likely to be found beside her.

“ Blessed were the prayers offered and the tears of godly sorrow shed by widow J— and my mother—tears over a long, long life of forgetfulness of God and sins against his holy laws—prayers of a broken heart, cries from a contrite spirit, which had been taught the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the far more exceeding riches of the grace of God.

“ And, lest the shadow of a spot
Should on my soul be found,
He took the robe the Saviour wrought,
And cast it all around.”

A. R.

SEED BY THE WAYSIDE.

AN AUTHENTIC ANECDOTE OF THE REV. ROWLAND HILL.

THE following authentic anecdote of the celebrated Rowland Hill illustrates a principle that cannot be too frequently impressed upon the minds of those who realize the pleasure as well as recognise the duty of using every opportunity of doing good. It may prove a salutary rebuke to those who are tempted to despise the simple and unostentatious means that are employed to scatter the precious seed of gospel truth in apparently uncongenial soil ; while the scoffer will find the fact one that cannot be explained in any other way than by a reference to that book of authority which declares that God's truth shall not return unto him void, but really accomplish the purpose for which it was intended.

A man who is seriously bent upon the accomplishment of any good work will find and embrace opportunities that escape the observation of a less earnest man. The really earnest man does not wait for splendid opportunities, or the turn of public opinion, before he begins to act ; he “ works while it is day,” and endeavours to meet all the claims that each day puts forth.

Such was Rowland Hill. Beneath the surface of his eccentricity, and at the root of his droll witticisms, flowed a deep stream of earnestness, impelling onwards to every good word and work. Perhaps many persons knew him only as "a funny preacher," who drew hundreds to attend his chapel in the Blackfriars-road. We hope that the anecdote about to be related of him will convince the reader that his highest aim was to do the work which God had given him to do.

Having been requested to preach a charity sermon in a country town, he was invited to sleep the previous night at the house of a friend. Accordingly, soon after dinner he mounted his horse, and rode towards the town, meditating upon the great themes on which he was going to preach, and gathering some lessons from those beautiful and suggestive scenes which the country so constantly presents. By the time he had reached the little village of —, famed for nothing except its lifelessness and destitution of Christian effort, the sky became overcast, and the rain descended in torrents, so that he resolved to proceed no further that day, if it were possible to obtain accommodation for himself and horse in the village. He rode up to the village inn, called the "Black Lion," and asked the landlord, who was standing at the door, whether he could let him have a bed.

"Yes, sir," said the landlord, "and a good one, too."

"Well, then," replied Rowland Hill, dismounting, "order me a good fire, take care of my horse, hang my cloak up to dry, and I will stay here for the night."

After taking off his wet clothes, and partaking of a comfortable tea, he sat before the fire, and for several hours read and contemplated the pages of that wondrous book, so suited to every circumstance and condition of mankind. He did not consume his time, as some, perhaps, would have done, in repining upon the apparent disaster which compelled him to spend a night at a lonely village inn, instead of the house of a Christian friend. While the storm raged without, he was calm, meditative, and thankful, for his companions were the prophets of old, the inspired apostles, and He who is ever clothed with glory and honour. Little did the landlord imagine whom he had for a guest, and how thankful he would be in after years that the storm drove such a one to take shelter beneath his roof.

As it was growing late, the landlord became impatient to get to bed (for the early-closing system has always obtained in country villages), and sent the waiter to acquaint Mr. Hill with his desire.

"Master wishes to know, sir, whether it will be agreeable to you to go to bed, as he never goes himself until he has seen all the lights put out?"

"Yes, my friend. I have been waiting a long time, expecting to be called to family prayer."

"Family prayer! I don't know what you mean, sir. We never have such things here."

"Indeed! Then tell your master I cannot go to bed until we have had family prayer."

The waiter left the room in astonishment; and Mr. Hill heard him tell the landlord that "the gentleman in the parlour was mad, for he says he won't go to bed until we have family prayer."

"Oh, indeed!" exclaimed the landlord; "I'll soon settle him."

He unceremoniously bounced into the room, saying, "Sir, I wish you would go to bed. I cannot go until I have seen all the lights out, I am so afraid of fire."

"So am I," said Mr. Hill, "and I am very tired; but I have been expecting to be summoned to family prayer."

"All very good, sir," cried the landlord; "but it cannot be done at an inn: it is impossible."

"Indeed!" replied Mr. Hill. "Suppose the house should be burned down, and all of us consumed to death! Pray get me my horse; I cannot sleep in a house where there is no family prayer."

"Dear me," ejaculated the landlord, in a tone of wonder; "I hope you will not think of leaving the house such a time of night—and such a night! I have no objection to have prayer; but I don't know how. I never said a prayer in my life."

"Well, then," said Mr. Hill, "summon all your people who are up, and let us see what can be done."

The landlord obeyed; and in a few minutes the domestics entered the room—some grinning in a most disrespectful manner, while others stared at the minister as if he were mad. He, however, bowed to them all as they entered; and then said, in a solemn manner, "Now we are all in the immediate presence of God, let us all kneel down." He then went up to the landlord, and asked him to begin prayer.

"Sir," said the landlord, "I don't know what to say; I never prayed in my life; I don't know how."

"Ask God to teach you," was the gentle reply of the minister. "He can hear you; he is with us now; ask him."

The landlord, folding his hands and lifting up his eyes, earnestly said, "God, teach us how to pray."

"That is right, my friend," cried Mr. Hill, joyously; "that is prayer. Go on."

"I don't know what to say, sir, I am sure," the landlord responded.

"Oh, yes, you do," said Mr. Hill. "You know we are all sinners; and what will become of us when we die?"

Again the landlord's eyes were raised; and, with great solemnity, he said, "Pray, God, make us all better people, and take us to heaven when we die."

"That is prayer, my friend—that is prayer. Go on," said Mr. Hill.

"I am sure I don't know what to say now, sir."

"Yes, you do. You asked God Almighty to teach you how to pray, and he has heard you. Now thank him for it."

The landlord devoutly uttered, "Thank you, God Almighty, for letting us pray to you. Amen."

"Amen, and amen," said Mr. Hill. "Now I will pray."

He thanked God for letting them pray to him; asked forgiveness of sin; and, although they might never again meet in the world, hoped they would never forget family prayer. He then dismissed them, and retired to bed. In the morning he rose early, breakfasted, wished them good bye, and rode away.

Two years had passed before the good old man saw them again. He had sown good seed by the wayside, but it had not been "devoured by the fowls of the air." On the night he visited the house for the first time, apparently by accident, the sights and sounds which met his eyes and greeted his ears were very different to what he subsequently found. Then he heard the ribald song and the coarse oath—now the voice of the blasphemer is hushed or changed into that of prayer.

"The wretch who once sang wildly, danced, and laugh'd,
And suck'd in dizzy madness with the draught;
Has wept a silent flood, reversed his ways;
Is sober, meek, benevolent, and prays."

Everything about the house appeared clean, quiet, and cheerful. The landlord, who was delighted to see the gentleman who had been the instrument of so much good to his household and neighbourhood, related to the no less delighted listener the many glorious results of that first effort of family prayer in his house; and, among other things, that they had built a chapel and a school in the village, and that family

prayer was constantly observed at the "Black Lion" night and morning.

Mr. Hill was so overjoyed at the news, that he fell on his knees, and thanked God that he had deigned to make him the instrument of so much good.

G. H.

A DISTRICT VISITOR'S NOTE BOOK.

ONE of my first visits in the district was at the house of a poor woman, whose husband was then upon his death-bed. A further acquaintance confirmed the favourable impression which was made upon me by her decent appearance amidst much poverty, and her uncomplaining submission to God's will amidst much affliction. I saw her again before the final stroke of separation came; and stood with her at the bedside of the dying man as he lay still, and insensible, apparently without suffering—that awe-inspiring, indescribable expression upon his face which told that he had done with this world for ever. The weeping wife spoke of his good qualities as a husband and a father, dwelling on little traits which she recalled with a bursting heart: but he did not think himself good, she said; his prayers during many months of illness had been for mercy on a "miserable sinner;" and the last words which he had been heard to utter were those which have given support to many a guilty soul in the hour of death—"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." What a comfort to hear of this as we gazed on the ghastly features, and listened to the struggling, failing breath! how consoling to tell the poor mourner beside me that Christ had taken away the sting from death, and that through him they might meet again in the kingdom of their Father! Often, alas! the visitor amongst the poor cannot in faithfulness dwell upon this "sure and certain hope;" for it is only given to the penitent sinner who has by the grace of the Holy Spirit really sought a Saviour's mercy: and where no sign of this is found, it is one of the most painful duties of the Christian to keep back the encouraging hope as inapplicable to the case, and to utter instead the word of warning or reproof.

The poor man "died, and was buried:" I trust we may add, "and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom," exchanging a scene of imperfection and suffering for "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." In the early part of his illness he had felt much anxiety for his wife, who would at his death be left, as he

knew, in the deepest poverty ; but afterwards he was enabled to cast this and every other care, upon God ; and the poor woman, I observed, even in the depth of her affliction, had the same unshaken assurance that the Lord would "provide." Nor was she disappointed. On my first visit after the funeral, she met me with a countenance in which grief and thankfulness were strangely mingled : she had received the offer of a situation, upon terms which would enable her to provide for the present maintenance of two young children who were dependent upon her ; the future she said, she could leave in God's hands ; and already she was making busy, though sorrowful preparation for giving up her humble home. The very poor have indeed but little time for the indulgence of regret. Sometimes I have pitied them for this ; but our better judgment tells us how well and wisely it is appointed that the mind should be withdrawn from vain and perhaps sinful lamentations over the dead, to the right and healthful discharge of our needful duties towards the living.

And so, after a brief acquaintance which yet has left a pleasant record in my memory, the widow and I bade each other a long farewell. I have never heard of her since ; and but for another and a sudden death that almost immediately followed, bearing in all its circumstances the strongest contrast to the little history which I have faintly sketched, I might have passed over those pages in my note-book which bring back to my recollection the widow Felton, with her pale, subdued countenance, and her low-roofed dwelling, scrupulously clean, though the scanty furniture and the bare shelves told a tale of want and privation of which I heard but little from her lips. As it is, the two incidents are inseparably linked together in my thoughts.

Another death ! Yes, my experience for one short month as a district visitor seemed to bring before me more of human suffering and sorrow than I had hitherto seen in a lifetime.

My first visit to the house of Mrs. Gardner was made on a sunny spring morning. A wretched, dirty room, literally unfurnished, excepting a crazy table and a chair with a broken back ; the fireless grate choked up with ashes and soot ; a rusty kettle standing on the "hob ;" a thrush hanging by the window in a crooked and worn-out cage, yet singing as the bright warm sunshine fell upon him ; the floor strewn with what one might have least expected to see, the loveliest flowers of early spring, cowslips, and primroses, and deep-blue violets ;

and in the midst of them, seated, a woman, still young, with bright, dark eyes, and a countenance giving token of understanding and acuteness. Beside her were two ragged children, busy like herself in sorting and tying up the flowers for sale. The group looked up as we entered, and then the mother rose, and at once comprehending our errand—for she was one of a class to whom charity is no new nor unwelcome thing—she entered upon her family history with freedom and minuteness, but with a lightness in her tone which did not enlist sympathy in her favour.

Her husband was a hard-working man ;—it happened that I knew something of his character, and I pitied him as I looked round the home to which, night after night, he had to return. They had lost a child in the winter ; its clothes caught fire, she told us, as if she had been speaking of some common occurrence, while she was gone with one of her neighbours to get the New Year's loaf. Now they had only these two remaining ; the girl went to the Ragged School, and as for the boy, his mother did not know that learning was ever likely to be of much use to him. A thought of their duty to *God*—of going to his house, of keeping his sabbaths, of obeying his word, never seemed to have entered her mind.

How hard it is to find a word which will obtain the attention of such a being—thoughtless, hardened, unapproachable, as it seems to us, through any channel even of those human affections which belong to our nature ! Yet a soul is there which must live for ever and ever—a soul, for which Jesus died. We turn, overpowered, from the awful contemplation ; and our only refuge is in prayer to Him who has all hearts in his hand, and can dispose of them even as he will.

Without an inquiry, Mrs. Gardner told me that she could not read. There had been an adult class at the Ragged School, which she had attended in the preceding year : but that was now given up through the illness of the teacher, and so she was forgetting the little that she had learned. My companion visitor would have proposed to instruct her, but there was evidently no desire on her part, for her husband, who was something of a scholar, had offered to teach her on Sundays, but that she said, with a laugh, would never do. We left her, not without some serious counsel, but it was heard with a careless ear, and forgotten, alas ! as soon as said.

A few days only had passed, and I was again in my district. There was a closed shutter at the house of Mrs. Gardner, and the look of stillness, which told me at a glance that death was

there. Suddenly he must have come—"at an hour when they looked not for him." My heart sank as I went into the house of a neighbour, and asked the question, who was dead? Rather, I thought in my inmost soul, who has *begun to live*? Which of that thoughtless number has entered upon eternity, has learned the secret—fearful to the unprepared—of a life to come.

It was the poor, hard-working, uncared-for husband. He had returned home the night before at his usual hour; had complained of no ailment; but early in the morning his wife was awakened by some slight movement, to find him dying at her side. Before help could be summoned, he was gone. It was one of those awful visitations which God sometimes sends to arrest the thoughts of the most careless, and to call to repentance all who will listen to the warning voice.

I felt it my duty, although a painful one, to see the widow without delay. *Then*, if at any time, her heart would surely be open to the entreaties of a Christian friend. I crossed the narrow street, and gave a hesitating knock at the door. It was opened by the little girl,—the boy was away—and the voice of Mrs. Gardner called, "Come in." I went in accordingly, and when she saw who it was she rose from the chair on which she had been sitting, and I saw that the light look was gone from her face, but there was not the expression of grief and awe that I wished to see. She shed a few tears; she spoke of the sudden loss; she said that she meant to lead a new life, and go to church, and bring up her children, if she could find friends, in better ways. But there was little feeling in what she said, for even this dreadful stroke had left unmoved the hardness of her heart.

She begged me to see the dead body of her husband, and though I shrank from compliance, yet, anxious to try every means to gain some influence over her, I would not refuse. And as I stood with her in that most melancholy, most miserable chamber, the lifeless form before us, which only one day since had taken part in this busy world, I sought faithfully to warn her that her own hour must come, and earnestly urged her to seek for the mercy which will never be denied to a sinner who desires to turn away from their wickedness and live. And I trust that I delivered the Master's message plainly, and I, and she, both deavoured to do it with kindness. She was very

she gains a living I know not how. But there is one lesson which the district visitor before all others must learn,—it is to do the work which is appointed her in faith and prayer, and to leave the event with God.

E. W.*

THE HOME FOR THE POOR, "A WIDE FIELD FOR USEFULNESS."

"A WIDE field for usefulness!" The expression is a common, but comprehensive one! It seems to present to our view the world lying in sin and in sorrow, with its cultivated spots and its desert places—its beaten tracks and its thorny wastes; the labourers of the Lord, anticipating in this the employment of angels, moving to and fro, making "the crooked paths straight, and the rough places plain," removing the thorns, and planting in the wilderness the precious seed of the word.

But while these labourers of love visit alike the lone cottage on the hill-side and the crowded cities of the plain, there is one portion of the "wide field" which seems too often comparatively neglected—one that we would gladly see more trodden by "the feet of them that bring good tidings." It is a thorny portion, too, where the labourer's hand is much needed, the voice of the comforter greatly required.

Have you not often remarked a building (I speak alike to the inhabitant of town or country), which does not attract the eye by its beauty, which has none of the palace but its size—a dull, many-windowed brick pile, suggesting ideas of crowded loneliness and congregated misery? It is neither a hospital nor a prison, yet partakes of the nature of both. It is the parish union!

The blind, the ignorant, the sick, and the friendless lie here side by side (alas! how little thought of by the outer world!), dependent chiefly for kindness and for sympathy upon a poor-house nurse, until the pauper bed is exchanged for a pauper grave. Oh that the eye of Christian benevolence were more wont to penetrate into the recesses of the unions of our land!

To convey some idea of the number of inmates contained within some of our parish unions, it may here be mentioned that, in the winter of 1847-48, there were upwards of two

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she gains a living I know not how. But there is one lesson which the district visitor before all others must learn,—it is to do the work which is appointed her in faith and prayer, and to leave the event with God.

E. W.

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To convey some idea of the number of inmates contained within some of our parish unions, it may here be mentioned that, in the winter of 1847–48, there were upwards of two thousand within the walls of the union which the writer of this paper had occasion to visit.

What we want is, general attention to the spiritual necessities of our unions; an organized system for their spiritual

visitation : and we earnestly desire yet to see the day when the chaplain of every union throughout the land shall be aided by a little auxiliary band of visitors, male and female, who may be "eyes to the blind," instructors of the ignorant, and friends of the friendless, in that portion of the spiritual vineyard where hitherto those labourers have been comparatively so few in number.

In illustration of this subject, we propose inserting a few incidents, gathered from the private note-book of one who, for some years past, has been accustomed to visit one of the unions of our metropolis.

"That poor creature was brought into the house almost in a state of starvation," said one of the women to me, as she pointed to an emaciated-looking patient, who lay stretched on one of the beds. She was aged seventy-nine, had been a seamstress, and, perhaps, had seen better days, for they showed me the books which had been found with her—a Bible and "A Companion to the Altar."

I wished to address her; but found, alas! that the mind of the sufferer was affected. It was touching to see her poor emaciated hands still work—working as if the severe habit of a life still clung to her in death, while she kept murmuring to herself, "Poor blind Dick," and other broken sentences, in a low tone of voice.

It was sad to think how this poor fellow mortal must have worked, and suffered, and starved ere she had come to this.

The case appearing to be one beyond the reach of religious consolation, I left the bedside of the sufferer to read or repeat some words of scriptural comfort to another who lay near; but, remarking that at the sound of my voice the dying seamstress soon lay very quiet, and seemed to be listening to what I said, I returned to her side, and spoke a few words on that subject which soonest reaches the heart both of sufferer and of penitent. I spoke of the compassion of our Lord.

Tears moistened the eyes of the dying woman, and she murmured gently, "I am thankful."

Touching words to proceed from those lips! What a lesson did they speak to my own heart!

This morning widow L— opened her heart to me more than she had previously done. She owned, with great candour and humility, that in the days of her youth and health she had been engrossed by earthly cares; her chief concern being that

her large family of fourteen children should "get on" in the world. For this object she had neglected the sabbath-day; for this she had neglected the care of her own soul.

"And now, ma'am," she added, "all my children have been taken from me. I have lost them all but one."

"And that one?"

"He never comes to see me."

Poor, desolate mother! But the God whom, in the days of her youth, she had forgotten, has not now forgotten her.

The humble earnestness with which she listens to the word of God, the patience with which she bears the loss of her eyesight, in addition to her other afflictions, all bring strong hope to my heart that, like the prodigal son, to whose history she so loves to listen, this wanderer, too, may find mercy, and a welcome in her "Father's home!"

"Indeed, ma'am, I am not what I once was," said the old Scotch woman, and she shook her head mournfully. "The time was when I was religious. I learnt some hymns of a young leddy, and aft ha'e I sung my gudeman to sleep wi' them! But now it's all ov'r wi' that. There's sic a din o' quarrelling and disturbance in this place, it's impossible to be religious here, ma'am."

What a contrast to these words of the old Scotch nurse were those spoken to me by another inmate of this same house.

I was about to read aloud in one of the wards, when the nurse told me that there was an aged patient, very ill indeed, who wished to speak with me.

A very thin, respectable-looking old woman lay calmly on the bed. She was dying; but hope and love to the Saviour shone in her heart with a brightness which refreshed my own. She took my hand respectfully but affectionately within hers when I approached her bed; and in a calm clear tone of voice told me of the peace and strong consolation which filled her soul.

"Oh, my dear ma'am," she exclaimed, "I do love the Lord with all my heart and mind. I have strong assurance of the pardoning mercy of my God through Christ. When all is quiet in the ward at night, it is so delightful to think of these things."

When next I called at the union, this patient was no more. Faith was exchanged for sight, and hope for, I trust, a glad fruition.

F. A.

'The perusal of the foregoing remarks has suggested to a friend the following lines:—

THE HOME ABOVE.

"THE pauper's bed!" oh, 'tis a weary place
For hearts the weight of loneliness to prove;
No change to hope for, save the grave!—no home,
Save in a home above!

"The pauper's bed!" where is the mother's voice
To cheer the joyless hours which slowly move?
Alas! the pauper weeps alone! they meet—
But in a home above.

How beautiful the feet of those who bring
Waters that sparkle from the well of love;
Tidings of hope for thirsty souls—and point
To a bright home above.

Tidings of One who left his glorious throne,
To break the meshes which our sins had wove,
And guide the wand'ring feet of fallen man
To his bright home above.

Lord of the harvest! send thy lab'ers forth
To gather mourning hearts, and souls that rove—
Scatt'ring the seed, whose blossoms shall unfold
In thy bright home above.

F. A.



MAY DAY.

"How bright and beautiful the morning is, and quite suited to this first day of the lovely month of May," said Anna, throwing up the sash of her window, and inhaling the breeze that came laden with sweets from the flower-garden beneath. "I think I will go to visit grandmamma: a walk through the fields would be delightful." And she set off, her spirits animated by the glow of health and youth, and her mind prepared to admire and enjoy everything.

Anna thought that she had never heard the birds sing so merrily, or seen the lambs frisk with such glee over the green turf as they did on this auspicious morning. "And it is," she thought, "only the beginning of enjoyment: the weather will become more settled and warmer every day: pretty as these spring flowers are, the summer blossoms which succeed them are far superior—then come the delicious fruits. People may talk of this world being a very bad and a very sad one, but to me it seems a very pleasant world, and its being so is a proof of the goodness of God. How nicely this is expressed in the book I was reading last night:—'Man is something more than an animal which wants lodging and food. He has an eye for the sublime and beautiful, and his Creator has provided his abode with ample materials for these nobler tastes. He has made it a world of fragrance and music—of brightness and symmetry—where the grand and the graceful—the awful and the lovely, rejoice together.' No wonder the psalmist should exclaim, 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all,' P'sa. civ. 24."

Pleased with herself for what she considered devotional feelings, Anna continued with light heart and step to wend her way, and did not observe that a cloud which had arisen in the western horizon, was fast increasing in size and darkness of hue, till the blue arch over head became obscured, and the landscape around her was no longer glowing with sunshine. "It is but a passing cloud," she thought; "the sun will soon be out again, and everything look more beautiful than ever."

A few drops now fell upon her face, and caused her to look about for shelter, but it was nowhere to be had. Then the distant roll of thunder was heard, and the rain began to fall heavily. After a few ineffectual efforts to save her dress, and the riband of her pretty spring bonnet from ruin, Anna got frightened in the apprehension of more serious evils. She was still at some distance from her grandmother's house, and no other was in the way: there might be another peal of thunder nearer than the first—there might be lightning, of which she was much afraid; and of her getting a severe wetting there could be no doubt, from which cold and illness might result.

How changed was everything around! The birds had stopped singing—the flowers hung their heavy heads, overcharged with rain—and the sportive lambs were cowering for shelter under the hedges. The charms of the rural scene were all gone, and it was so tiresome to walk through the wet grass, that poor Anna betook herself to the road, which was near. Even here her progress was slow, as a strong gale which blew right against her had sprung up, and much impeded her progress. Thus frightened, drenched with rain, and altogether in a sad plight, she arrived at length at her grandmother's dwelling.

The old lady was greatly distressed at seeing her condition. She made her, with due speed, take off her wet garments, get into a well-warmed bed, and take some hot wine and water. Anna, who had been fatigued as well as frightened by her disastrous excursion, fell into a sound sleep. On waking she found herself refreshed, and soon joined her grandmother beside a cheerful fire, which, May day though it was, looked attractive; for still all outside was gloom, verifying the poet's words that even at this genial season,—

- "Winter oft at eve resumes the breed,
Chills the bright morn, and bids his driving sleets
Deform the day delightless."

Anna gave her grandmother, by whom she was welcomed with an affectionate smile, an account of her walk, and of the thoughts and feelings which it had occasioned her.

"Well, my dear child," said the old lady, "perhaps it may not be unprofitable to view your little May-day adventure as if it were a type of your future life. You are now in the prime of youth and health; your path, like that on which your walk commenced this morning, strewed with flowers, and brightened by a cloudless sky, while hope permits you not to dream of changes. But blossoms will be blighted, and storms will gather as surely as they did to-day."

"A sad prospect, grandmamma; but how do you know that it will be realized?"

"It is the lot of humanity, my child—the consequence of sin. Trials, in some shape or other, will come; the question is, how shall we meet them?"

Anna looked thoughtful, and said, "I hope, when they do, I can say, Thy will be done. God is a loving Father, and sends sorrow in mercy."

"So his word declares, Anna, and so we profess to believe; but the difficulty is to feel that it really is so, when trial comes. You tell me that in gazing on the bright scenes around you this morning your heart glowed with love to the Creator, and a deep conviction that all his works were made in wisdom. Tell me, when the storm came on, did this feeling last, and give you courage to meet it?"

Anna coloured. "I was startled, grandmamma; it came suddenly, and I was trying to keep myself dry—and then looking for shelter—and in short I did not think—"

"Did not think of Him who sent it, my child? Now, would it not be well before the storms of life come, to ascertain that you are prepared for them; that you have really sought and found a refuge in Him who is 'as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land?' Isa. xxxii. 2."

Anna did not reply, but looked thoughtful, as if these words had made an impression on her mind. After a while her grandmother continued, "I too, dear child, have had my May day of youth and happiness, so far as this world can give it; and, just like yours this morning, it was soon overclouded, and, storms arose before I knew where to flee from them. Oh! Anna, I suffered a great deal;" and her voice trembled. "But praise be to the Lord, he taught me fully to

understand and feel the blessed truths which his Spirit has revealed for our unspeakable comfort, particularly in the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, and I can clearly see that it was good for me to be afflicted."

"Well, grandmamma, I can easily comprehend," the young lady replied, "that when trials are over, and we are enabled to perceive the good which they produced, we may feel satisfied, or even thankful for them. But while the thunder peals, and the storm rages, and we are hurt and frightened, how is it that we can feel peace and comfort?"

"By faith, Anna; that faith in God's promises—in 'the immutability of his counsel'—which is as 'an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast,' Heb. vi. 19. Let us try habitually to exercise this child-like trust in our heavenly Father, remembering that he makes all things, little and great, work together for good to them that love him; even in a summer shower, Anna, and that which befel you to-day was little more: then, when tempests arise, a sense of safety will keep us in peace. As to a knowledge of how trials operate for good, it is not always vouchsafed to us in this life—probably we shall know hereafter: but even here we often can plainly perceive it."

"Dear grandmamma," Anna replied, "I believe I thought myself more advanced in the Christian course than I am—that I had more trust in God—more—" and she stopped, evidently humbled.

"My beloved Anna, if we are thinking more highly of ourselves in anything than we ought to think, it is well to find it out. But to return to what I was saying; in your little adventure this morning I am able even now to know distinctly that what was so unpleasant, operated for your temporal safety and welfare. And I trust I may hope it will do far more—that it has impressed a lesson on your young heart which will, with God's blessing, be useful through life.

"And now to explain myself. I had scarcely settled you to sleep after your arrival, when my neighbour, farmer Brown, walked in, a large club in his hand, and his countenance expressing alarm. 'You spoke to wife last night ma'am,' said he, 'about having sillabub for some young friends you expected this May day. I knew Miss Anna would be one of them, and I also knew that she often walks here across the fields. Now, ma'am, I have just heard that there is a terrible bull in one of the fields through which she would

come, and so I'm going to meet her as fast as I can.' I thanked him warmly, and told him of your arrival. He seemed extremely rejoiced, and then informed me that the animal had suddenly become quite furious, and had hurt two men who tried to catch it; so that your danger was indeed great, and you were saved from it by the storm which drove you off your pleasant flowery path through the fields, and obliged you to betake yourself to the common road."

Anna was much affected, and expressed deep thankfulness for this instance of providential care. "Never forget," said the old lady; "and when you cannot understand all the dispensations of your Father, remember that—

"Day by day, and year by year;
Will make the dark enigma clear;
And furnish us' perhaps at last,
Like other scenes already past,
With proof that we, and our affairs,
Are part of a Jehovah's cares;
For God unfolds by slow degrees
The purport of his deep decrees;
Sheds every hour a clearer light,
In aid of our defective sight;
And spreads at length before the soul,
A beautiful and perfect whole."

E. F. G.

ROBERT THE SOLDIER.

DURING the war which was terminated at the peace of 1814, an English and a Prussian surgeon frequently met when attending the sick and wounded. Similarity of profession, and still more sympathy of mind and religious principle, gave rise to a friendship, which continued and strengthened when they quitted the army, and was kept up by frequent interchange of letters and occasional meetings. Dr. J— took the opportunity of the opening of the Great Exhibition in London, to urge his friend to visit him, and in his letter of invitation playfully added to other motives for his coming, that, in accordance with the principles and love of peace, Dr. K— professed he was bound to come over to a meeting that must, as Dr. J— thought, promote peace among nations even if friendship did not bring him.* Dr. J— also made some inquiries respecting a soldier to whom his friend had alluded in a former letter. Dr. K— answered by the following letter, apparently thinking his friend was too sanguine in his hopes of peace.

"I accept your invitation, dear friend, with great pleasure, and hope to be with you at the opening of your Crystal Palace. We shall thus, in our elderly days, see a crowd of people of various and distant countries again assembled in one capital. What a glorious contrast to that we witnessed at the commencement of our friendship, when we entered Paris, you under Wellington and I under Blucher!

"Our love of peace and peaceful pursuits soon caused us both to quit the army and settle down to private practice, and God has blessed us in our efforts after professional success. As a lover of peace I must rejoice to see so many eagerly hasting to share in what I regard as a demonstration and symbol of peace amongst the nations, at least of Europe. At the same time, our admiration must not lead us to consider it more than outward and temporary peace; for except grace reign in the heart of man, the evil passions lie dormant but for a while, ready to burst forth and kindle into war and bloodshed at a slight spark of provocation. True peace, however, may reign in and keep tranquil the heart of the servant of God, even in the midst of war and bloodshed.

"Just before you and I first met, attending in that hospital where so many sick and wounded needed surgical assistance, I had proof of this in the case of the soldier Robert, about whom you inquire, and whose death has been present to my mind ever since hearing from you, as an exhibition of true peace when all around was warlike. As I walk through the village, or, mounted on my old grey horse, visit some distant patient, I often reflect on the scenes of former days, and sometimes forget myself and all around me, and fancy I hear the trumpet recalling the scattered troops, or the booming of cannon in the distance, and then suddenly start to recollection that peaceful scenes and rural sounds alone are before me; but for many days Robert has been the subject of these my reveries.

"When I joined my corps as an army surgeon, I found myself surrounded by young men, and as the war at that period was considered a war of liberation, many men of birth and education were glad to serve as private soldiers. There was such changing of men that I got acquainted with the features and appearance of many whose names I never learned. Some of these I have since met, settled as quiet citizens, who have recognised and addressed me. But you will think it curious that I should have formed a heartfelt friendship for one whose surname I do not even now know. 'Robert' was

the only name inscribed on his coffin when his remains were interred in a little village churchyard in France, far from his home and his friends, if he left any.

“Even a more experienced person than I then was must have been struck by the evident superiority of Robert, though in the dress of a private soldier. When gathered round the watch-fire of an evening, or on the march, his comrades considered him silent and somewhat melancholy, but I always found him cheerful and ready to converse. There was, however, something in his manner and appearance different from his fellow-soldiers. He was very young, and of a fresh and blooming complexion and soft expression of countenance, and always neat in his dress. His appearance gave rise to many jokes and jests, as that he was a young lady in disguise, that he need fear nothing, since even the enemy would not molest a tender girl, and so forth. But in a night attack on a battery defended by the French, he soon proved his manliness.

“When called to dress the wounds of the few who returned from the attack, I was surprised to find Robert amongst them; for the volunteer corps to which he was attached, I knew was not ordered there. But I soon learned that he and two others had asked permission to be of the number, and when the leader fell, Robert had taken the command and led on a body of men to storm the battery. He was as calm as ever when I spoke to him on the subject, and said he was glad of the opportunity of showing that a Christian soldier would not lag behind at a critical moment; that his two volunteer companions had fallen, so that it was his place to come forward. For his conduct his general promoted him on the spot, and he recovered from his wounds so quickly, that in a very short time he was able to leave the hospital wagon in which we carried the wounded, and mount his horse as lieutenant. All jokes and sarcasms now ceased, and his manners, which had been considered cold and reserved as a private, were courteous and unassuming as an officer; but I must say he did appear more open and friendly when promoted.

“Soon after this we were quartered in a little village where the inhabitants had already suffered so much from troops of all parties marching through it, that they were ill-disposed towards soldiers of any nation, and our general found it necessary to enforce the strictest discipline, to prevent our soldiers from acts of violence in revenge for the unwillingness of the villagers to supply them. The following evening, as

we gathered round the fires to refresh ourselves from the stores that had now come from the camp, each one had something to relate of the preceding night, and many complaints were heard, soldier-fashion, of the shabby dealings of the inhabitants towards those who called themselves their deliverers. Jests too went round and much laughter, at the tricks practised on the poor villagers to make them discover their hoards of provision.

"Robert remained silent till some one said, 'Well, lieutenant, you probably were quartered on the mayor or some rich inhabitant, who regaled you and gave you a comfortable bed. You have had nothing to complain of.'"

"'I have nothing to complain of, indeed,' answered Robert. 'Two of my friends, who really needed refreshment more than I did, asked me to change quarters with them, and I did so, and was thus lodged in the cottage of a poor and pious widow, who, on my asking civilly, shared with me all the little provisions she had. She told me afterwards that she had awaited our arrival in fear and trembling, and in prayer to God to protect her from ill usage by rough-mannered foreign soldiers. We were soon friendly together, and I distributed amongst her little children some chocolate which a rich lady, at whose house I had been quartered a few nights before, had put into my knapsack. We ate a frugal meal together and conversed as well as my broken French permitted, and I then lay down on my straw couch and slept as if on eider down till morning. I bade her a solemn farewell this morning, for we are not likely to meet again except in the kingdom of God.'

"'Yes,' said a soldier, 'but I saw you, lieutenant, softening the pain of parting to the woman, by paying her, and dare say richly, for her straw couch and water soup.'

"'Not richly, certainly,' said Robert; 'a soldier's purse is seldom a full one.' Complaints and jests on bad lodgings soon ceased, and conversation took another turn.

"Robert and I became very intimate: we were quite like brothers. Though I had read the Bible before, and had received religious instruction at school, and even attended theological lectures at college, to Robert I owe my knowledge of what true faith consists in. I have never met any man who seemed so entirely governed and led by religious principle. Of course he had inward struggles, but, outwardly, he appeared to go right as it were by instinct, so completely natural did the impulse seem. The proper words to say at

the right moment were the first to present themselves to his mind and memory. I am very sure that at that period a fiery zeal for my conversion, or any expression of anger against some remains of infidelity which were then rankling in my mind, though I called myself a Christian, would have repulsed me, and made all else he said or did of no effect; but a mother could not show more patience and forbearance with the waywardness of a child than Robert did with me, though we were of equal years. But it was at the deathbed of this dear friend that I learned most and received the strongest convictions.

"A few days before we entered Paris, a few days too before his death, we were on the march with a small division of the army on a cross road, and passing through a retired village heard a church bell tolling. 'How sweet, how joyful that sound is!' said Robert: 'it seems to announce the going home of a soul to eternal peace and rest after the turmoil and danger of life.'

"He rode beside me in silence for some time, buried in thought. His emotion on this occasion I afterwards thought was like a presentiment of his approaching death; but, indeed, death must have been ever present to his mind in the life we then led. He fell in a skirmish a few days after this. Not many were either killed or wounded, but he was among the latter, and I soon saw that though the bleeding was staunchd without much difficulty, his wound was mortal. It was from a musket ball in the lower part of the trunk of the body.

"Robert questioned me about it, and with him untruth or evasion was not to be thought of. I gave him a straightforward answer, and I shall never forget the look he gave when he heard my opinion. There was not the slightest trace of that indifference or levity of mind with which I have known many receive the tidings of approaching death, and who were considered by their comrades brave and wise on account of this very indifference. It is, however, not a proof of manliness, but of utter ignorance of the meaning of either life or death. I have also seen those who received with horror and despair the tidings that death was near at hand. But not like any of these was my friend. He folded his hands together and his lips moved, and I knew by the expression of his features that it was a moment of calm communion with his Saviour. He then turned to me and smiled, and though tears were in his eyes they were tears of joy rather than of sorrow or suffering.

"My duty called me to attend to others, and when I returned it was night; and during my absence Robert had been moved into a house in a by-street, and was lying in a quiet chamber dimly lighted. 'You do not like to leave me alone my last night on earth,' he said, when he perceived me in the room; 'but I was not alone during your absence. Oh! I wish I could describe to you the blessed society in which I was and am. Stay with me and enjoy my happiness.' We both remained silent, and in the silence of the night beside the bed of that dying Christian, I felt an inward peace, such as I had never experienced in my life before.

"After a while Robert pointed to a Testament lying near him, and asked me to read the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel. I read, and as I did so a tinge of colour reddened his cheek, and his eye brightened for a moment, as if he already had entered on the happiness he had anticipated. He, however, fell into a quiet slumber, which I supposed to be the beginning of the sleep of death; but he woke once more. He asked for a glass of water, and thanked me for it with a happy smile. His voice was stronger than before he slumbered.

"Have you any message or remembrance to be given to remaining friends?" I inquired.

"They are all gone home before me," he answered. "They were believers, they were faithful, I shall meet them yonder;" and he pointed upwards. "Be true, be faithful to thy Saviour, my dear friend. This is the last blessing, the best I can give you. God bless my native land and give her peace. May the faith of Christ be victorious; Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever!"

"A shade passed over his countenance; I knew it to be the shade of death, and read the song of Simeon, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,' etc. Before I reached the last verse he had slept in death. It was like sleep to him. I closed his eyes and stayed beside his remains until morning. Never can I forget the feelings of that night; and I shall have cause to praise God through eternity for the privilege of witnessing the calmness, and peace, and joy attending the last hours on earth of a soul resting with loving confidence on its God and Saviour."

E. M. P.

THE LEGACIES OF SIN.

BY OLD HUMPHREY.

HAVE you ever, from a rising ground, looked down upon a peaceful vale and quiet village, when the church spire, the

mill water-wheel, and the winding brook have glittered in the sun; when the green pastures have been studded with flocks and herds; when the farm-houses and cottages have appeared to be the abodes of comfort and contentment; when the waving woods, in massy foliage, piled height over height above the river, commanding a delightful view, have themselves greatly added to its beauty; and when the clear blue heavens and snow-white clouds have given to the whole an indescribable character of purity, cheerfulness, and joy, awakening emotions of thankfulness, and calling forth the incense of the heart? Oh yes, you must have gazed on such a scene, for it is a common one, and hundreds have regarded it with conscious delight.

“Still dear to fancy’s eye the varied scene
Of wood, hill, dale, and sparkling brook between;
Still sweet to fancy’s ear the warbled song
That soars on morning’s wing the vales among.”

But you may not have regarded the same prospect with a mind sobered by reflection, and solemnized with the consideration of the fearful legacies which sin has bequeathed to mankind. Witnessed when the mind is thus impressed, the glittering spire, the green pastures, the comfortable homesteads, the waving woods, and the sunny heavens are for a season overlooked. A shadow gathers on the brow of the spectator, and he regards the dwelling-places of his fellow men with sympathy, compassion, and sorrow. Come with me, and from the neighbouring height look down on the valley below, while an old man points out to you what your more youthful experience may not have made known. Let his speech be **free**, for his heart beats kindly for all beneath the skies.

* * * * *

What can be more beautiful than the extended scene before us—hill and valley, wood and water, green meadows, and shady lanes? A poet would be likely enough to call it a paradise; but if he did, on a nearer approach he must admit that the footprints of Satan are visible therein.

Do you see the two cottages on the tump by the brook side? The one has a grape-vine and the other a myrtle-tree climbing up the walls. One might indulge in a pleasant dream on the happiness of those who dwell there. Happiness! can happiness reside with envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness? The tenants of these two cottages have had a deadly quarrel; and now the first desire of their hot and angry hearts is to thwart, and irritate, and torment one another.

Anger and hatred are legacies of sin, which change kindness and peace into bitterness and discord.

The low-roofed habitation, covered with ivy, at the end of the lane yonder, was once the abode of Ambrose Gill, a penurious scrape-together of worldly goods. His besetting vice was greed. So covetous was he, that nearly all which his eye saw his heart hankered after. Instead of being content with what God had given him, he must needs have, too, what had been given to his neighbour, and so his peace was poisoned. The foolish man might often have secured more real satisfaction in giving away a penny than in hoarding up a pound; but gold was the idol to which he bowed down. Oh that men who can find so little time to seek after heavenly treasures should waste so much time in heaping up worldly riches! Truly covetousness is another of sin's legacies.

Years ago, alderman Herringford lived at the mansion in the park. He had health and wealth, and his only son Alfred was to support the honours of his house. Alas! on what sandy foundations Ambition erects her proudest pyramids, Nothing would satisfy Alfred but military glory. To the wars he would go, and to the wars he went to his cost.

A battle is a fearful thing, and so he found it. The heavy tread of horses' hoofs and of thousands of armed soldiers sounded ominously: at last the two armies met and the battle began; muskets were fired, cannons discharged, swords and bayonets clashed against each other, till clamour and clouds of smoke and confusion prevailed. A thousand bright flashes rent their way through the thick smoke, and the deafening roar of the artillery went on. By and by the wind raised up the smoky curtain for a season, and the horse and his rider, and the dead and the dying, were seen strewing the plain. The fight again was renewed with added rage, and continued till thousands fell. When the battle was over, Alfred was found among the wounded, with a shattered leg and a bullet in his shoulder. Again and again have I seen Alfred, the hope of the house of Herringford, wandering disconsolately in the park with a cork leg, and a bullet in his shoulder which the surgeon could not remove. War is one of the worst legacies that sin has bequeathed to the world.

Years have now passed since two twin sisters, the "Fair Villagers" as they were called, inhabited the Gothic Lodge. You may just see the top of it peeping out above the little shrubbery which surrounds it. One of the Fair Villagers was about to be wedded to a worthy young farmer, when unhap-

pily an officer in the army, who came to reside for a season in the neighbourhood, paid her a few attentions, which so excited her vanity as to make her ashamed of her country suitor. The young farmer, thus supplanted in his affections for one sister, tried his best to secure the other; but she, influenced by the example set before her, refused him. Deeply affected, he quitted the village, taking a farm in a distant county. The officer soon after went abroad, and left the "Fair Villagers" deserted. In that Gothic Lodge they pined away, stung by the reproach of their neighbours and their own accusing consciences; and there they died of what is called a "broken heart." Among the legacies of sin, vanity and pride must not be forgotten.

Hardly is there a tenement visible from this commanding eminence of which I could not say something, setting forth how fearfully sin has blighted the fair flowers of human enjoyment. In one dwelling-place beats a heart that harbours hypocrisy; in another, one that fosters revenge; in a third, one that practises injustice. Anger, covetousness, ambition, and pride are but a very few of the legacies of sin. These legacies are almost without number, and sorrow and sickness, pain and death, are among them.

But if the legacies of sin are so many and so fearful, blessed be God for the legacy left us in the glorious gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which is able to remedy these evils, and to save us from their just reward.

All have their besetting sins. As, then, we have all been bitten by the serpent, let us all hasten to the cross, that by a living faith in Him who died thereon for sinners we may be healed for ever.

Whate'er of grief our hearts and souls endure,
That cross through faith will prove a perfect cure.

DECADES OF LIFE.

CHARLES RAINFORD was a fine forward boy, of ten years old, when it was deemed right that he should begin his career at a public grammar-school; on which occasion his private resolution was made to distance all competitors, and to carry off all the prizes. Going to school was a great event, and Charles had friends who desired that he should carry into that little world of little men principles which would lead him to reject the evil and choose the good.

Having given an impatient hearing to many wise cautions and admonitions, he soon found himself introduced to the

sports and mischiefs of the play-ground, as well as the exciting routine of public education. Home precepts were speedily forgotten, but school discipline prevailed; and in due time the youth emerged from classes and lecture-rooms, well furnished for all the demands of respectable society, and the mercantile firm in which his father's interest destined him to figure. On Sundays he generally heard something about heaven, and on week days he considered that he had quite enough to do to attend to the business of earth.

At twenty he was a person of no inconsiderable importance. His career in business was begun with the same spirit and energy which characterized his school days, and everybody prognosticated Rainford's success.

"Twenty years ago I was born," said he, "which was a pleasant event; ten years ago I went to school, which was a prudent event; now I am fairly launched in business, which is, I think, a very lucky event. I wonder what will happen in another ten and another twenty years. I suppose we shall be steady old gentlemen, plodding away like our ancestors from the time of Noah. Hey, Archer; what do you think?"

Archer was a young clerk in the office, who sat nearest to Rainford's desk. "It is not of much use to calculate about that," replied Archer, "since we cannot foresee what even a day may bring forth. So far you can say, 'I bless thee for creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life;' and I hope you may do so until, full of years and honour, you exchange this world for a better."

"Pshaw! you are such a grave fellow—I cannot make anything of you. However, I am bound to thank you for such a pretty birth-day wish. My duty now is to work, and see what that will have done for me in ten years' time. I mean to have a little time for play into the bargain, or else I shall be but a dull boy."

A time for play, as he called it, was not neglected, and had very nearly cut short all time for future work. A few days after this conversation he joined two young men in a boating excursion; and having spread sail in a strong breeze when prudence would have trusted to the oar, the little skiff capsized, and by the time assistance arrived the whole party had become cold and insensible. They were with much difficulty restored, and in Rainford's case a dangerous illness ensued.

While he was dull and weak and irritable, his pleasantest friends kept away, and Archer was the only acquaintance who found time to go in and chat awhile with the invalid; and

Rainford protested that "a saint" was better than nobody, though "saints" never took much trouble to remember the news. Sometimes Rainford challenged his visitor to argument upon some abstruse point of doctrine, as a decoy, he said, to lead him off from points where it disturbed his complacency to be attacked; but Archer seldom humoured him in this particular. "I do not think you are a competent judge of God's word," he would say; "your reason is quite equal to judge upon the evidences of its authenticity; but no man is fit to form opinions upon its doctrines until the mind of Christ is within him—until the Spirit that indited has instructed his spirit to receive it."

"Well, you know I dislike the egotism of your narrow personal views. I think true religion is a matter between my conscience and the Almighty, and that no one has any occasion to meddle with what he cannot possibly read or appreciate."

"Surely nothing can be more narrow and personal than such a contact as that," said Archer, quietly; "but those who shake off the offensive intrusions of a fellow sinner under such a pretext seldom seem to risk it. A human conscience awakened in immediate contact with the piercing scrutiny of a perfectly holy God is intolerable agony. There are only two ways of escape, and only one an infallible and everlasting way."

"Well, what are they?"

"One, a temporary way, is by lulling conscience to sleep, or deadening its sensitiveness by continual neglect. The other, the safe and eternal way, is by casting oneself wholly upon Christ, and leaving all contact with God's justice and purity to him, while we clasp, in faith and peace, God's love and mercy manifested towards us in him."

"I can inform you that conscience is pretty lively and wakeful when a man thinks himself drowning."

"I have no doubt of it, Rainford; and are not the balm and the good Physician needed then? But conscience, when cleansed by the atoning blood of Jesus, need give no trouble even to a drowning man."

"Well, then, since you have got so far, let me have your receipt for keeping conscience in a state of comfortable repose under any circumstances. I suppose you will hinge everything upon your pet virtue, faith."

"The pet root of every virtue, if you please; but suppose I disappoint your expectations, and say, love is the downy pillow on which conscience may repose in peace."

"Love! I have no objection to that."

"God is love. He so loved as to give his own Son to suffer our penalty and pay our debt; and when, by his Spirit applying that truth, we are assured of such deliverance, we love him who first loved us. This is the love that presides over duty, and secures its fulfilment to the best of our ability; and when acting under such a motive, all our services are accepted through Him who blots out all our sin, and conscience merely occupies a sort of honorary post, as the guardian of 'duty made easy.' Then you may mark the perfect, and behold the upright; and wherever and however it may come, the end of that man is peace."

"You make it out so smoothly, that I wonder your recipe is not more generally acceptable, Archer."

"It requires a surrender of self and sin, and that is not palatable, I fear. But," continued Archer, "what does your conscience say to you, now that you are recovering, Rainford?"

"Humph! It says, You have had a narrow escape, and take care that you make a better use of your life in future."

"Let it follow up, then, until it bring you where you say that true religion lies—between it and God, and drive you to the Refuge of sinners. Do not say to it, Go thy way for this time: when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

When ten more years were added to the life of Rainford, he was about to settle in gentlemanly style and comfort, and to take upon himself the chief responsibilities of the business which, on his father's death, reverted in full prosperity to him. He still had his "time for play," and the shooting season was a particularly favourite time.

One bright exhilarating day he was rambling with a friend in search of game. The fading leaf and mellow tints of a late autumn yet lingered on the scene; but the sportsmen were not in meditative mood, and the open moor was more attractive than sunny glade or verdant dell. On they went, laughing, talking, thoughtless of everything but present pleasure, when a hedge impeded their progress. Doubtless there might be a gate somewhere; but it was waste of time to look after it when symptoms of a gap invited a quicker method. Rainford quickly cleared the fence, gaily calling on his friend to follow, when the sudden firing of a gun was heard, and a groan of agony recalled him to the spot. His companion's trigger had been caught by a twig, and the contents of the gun were lodged in the body of its owner.

"Oh, save me! I am not fit to die," murmured the wounded man. Rainford, in grief and horror, looked around for help. Again the pale lips quivered with some incoherent sound; and, hastily deciding to seek for assistance, Rainford gently laid the head he supported on the grass, and darted away to a cottage they had not long passed. Accompanied by two stout labourers he returned; but the spirit had meanwhile departed, and the body, so lately vigorous with health and strength, was all that claimed his care.

The shock was great. Those melancholy words haunted Rainford's memory, "Oh, save me! I am not fit to die." "Surely," thought he, "had our fates been reversed, I had uttered the same despairing cry, for neither am I fit to die."

He attended the funeral, and his presence was missed at many a scene of gaiety. Twice on the sabbath-day, for at least two months, his place at public worship was filled by an apparently devout worshipper. His friends remarked that "the melancholy incident seemed to have produced a great effect on Rainford." But as the vividness of the impression wore away, he began to think there was really no occasion to mope and be gloomy about a circumstance that he could not have prevented. People must all die some time; but it was possible to prolong life by proper care and thought. He certainly should not be so fond of shooting as formerly;—and in a little time all went on as before.

Another ten years. Rainford was forty now. A pleasant companion, a firm friend, an upright, honourable man of business, a kind husband and father; and, in fact, everybody respected and liked him. However, he still considered it a piece of impertinence in any man to speak about the soul of another. Soul! he had no patience with the word, except in the pulpit: it was a Sunday word—a very proper word in a sermon. It was very well for ministers that there happened to be such things as souls; but when heard from other lips, the word savoured of cant and methodism; as if a man could not be religious without letting everybody know it! "No, no," said he, "shallow streams always make the most noise; the deepest feeling is the most silent and reserved."

Notwithstanding, it was becoming and right, as men advanced in life, that they should be serious, and religious too, in moderation; and so should he, but at present he had not time, and a private consultation with conscience was continually deferred until a more "convenient season." It was not

necessary to begin to think so much about another world before he had half done with this.

About this time some important business in a distant colony claimed attention; and Rainford, after some prudent consideration, resolved to go thither himself. His absence need not extend over more than two or three months. The trip would be highly beneficial in every way; and he could be as comfortable in the splendid saloon of the great steam-ship as in his own drawing-room. His arrangements were all made; and, cheering himself and his family with hopes of speedy reunion, he departed.

The voyage was delightful, and Rainford enjoyed it. One only circumstance ruffled him for a moment in the midst of a meditation upon the prosperities of his life. A gun was suddenly fired from the deck, and a bird fell into the sea. A faint remembrance of the uncertainty of life, the dying moments of his sporting companion, his own forgotten resolutions, recurred to his memory; he felt uneasy, but land was not far off, and he took out his memorandum-book, and began to reconsider his plans.

The business which had attracted him so far was satisfactorily completed; and, after enjoying all the opportunities his time afforded of viewing places and observing character in that locality of another hemisphere, Rainford engaged a berth in one of the mail steam-packets, having previously written to apprise his family of the period of his return. Beautiful weather and favouring winds made pleasant speed for the homeward bound, and the captain calculated upon reaching port twenty-four hours before the usual time. Rainford was an excellent sailor, and spent the chief of his time on deck. At night he would sometimes share the watch for an hour or two; and on the last-expected night of the voyage, wrapped in his cloak, he declared his intention of inhaling the last breath of the Atlantic before retiring to rest.

As evening closed, the moon shone out at intervals between fleecy clouds from a deep blue sky; the wind was somewhat on the increase, and the silver crest of the moon-lighted waves sometimes dashed over the deck as the stately ship swept through them, or rose and dipped with their graceful swell. One after another the passengers had gone cheerily below, as their footing became less agreeable in the rising gale; and the last, as he groped his way past Mr. Rainford, remarked that he must be a daring sailor if he stood those unceremonious lurches much longer.

"I must have another half-hour's fresh air," said Rainford, as he stepped to a greater elevation, and threw his arm over a rope to steady his position. "It is a magnificent scene, and will be passed before dawn."

The wind still rose higher, and the ship tossed before it with increased speed. Suddenly the passengers below missed the dull, heavy thump of the engine; there seemed to be some confusion, and a shouting of orders on deck, and several gentlemen rushed from the saloon in alarm."

"Hark!" said the captain; "I thought—I scarcely know why—but a strange sound reached my ear, and I thought there was a man overboard. I hope I am mistaken."

Hark again! there was a sound. Was it only the wail of the night wind? Ah, no! Ropes were thrown out—voices roared directions—but the ship was driving before the wind, and no human strength could buffet with the swelling sea. In vain the effort to put back; in vain brave men were ready to risk their lives to save a fellow-creature. The frightful suspense was unbroken by a repetition of the cry; no form appeared to the straining eyes that watched; and the captain broke the dead silence in a hoarse voice to demand who was missing. The crew were safe. The passengers looked around, and at each other.

"Where is Mr. Rainford?" asked the gentleman who had seen him last on deck. He was not to be found, and the answer was read in many a pale and pitying countenance.

The measured beat of machinery was presently heard as before, the ship sped on her homeward way, and the lost passenger was gone down to the dark depths of the Atlantic.

What may occur at such a moment between the sinner and his God is not for human judgment to penetrate; but let us not neglect a solemn sentence put on record by the eternal Spirit, who never inspired men to write words without meaning:—"Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord."

B. T.

WORK AND REST.

"This is not your rest," Micah ii. 10.

WHAT a mystery is this world! How strangely diverse are its aspects! And how strangely blended! They are strangely diverse. There is joy, there is sorrow. There is union, there is separation. There is life, there is death. Conditions of being the most opposite surround us, every one of them penetrating man's heart to its inmost depths. And they are as strangely blended. Pains and pleasures are brought so near together as to form a vivid, and often a startling contrast; so that we can scarcely smile for tears, and we no sooner weep than we must rejoice. Is all this capable of explanation? And may we ask with any hope of an answer, What is this world to us?

We may; and the few words which are placed at the head of this page will supply an answer, drawn, not from human wisdom, but Divine.

They present to us, in the first instance, an important negation. This world is not our rest.

How appropriate is this announcement! For that it is our rest is just what we all seem naturally to think it to be as our young eyes open upon it,—the appointed theatre of our activity, and hope for our affections. And we begin with treating it accordingly. We love it with an intensity that will brook no denial, and as though the possession of the objects of our love were a necessary part of our being; we form plans, and lay ourselves out in the execution of them, as though we were providing for a perpetual residence, and constructing a "rest" which should never be disturbed. Our hearts would fain make a rest of this world if we could, and thus the warning that it is not so comes directly home to us.

And this warning is not more appropriate than true. Ah! it needed, indeed, no voice from heaven to convey to us this information. All around us is full of change, and of change from which we ourselves cannot escape. Disappointment and death are on every side. Mortal sicknesses assail those we love, and with stricken hearts we see our choicest treasures rent from us by an awful, irresistible hand. We are withdrawn from active pursuits to watch with trembling the hour of death; and it becomes the business of life to carry, as it were, portions of ourselves to the grave—the parent his child and the child his parent, the husband his wife and the wife her husband; till at length nothing seems left us for which to

live, nor anything to remain to us but to take our place in the long home by the side of the unforgotten dead. No, assuredly; whatever this world may be, it is not our rest.

How influential should such a consideration be with us! How subdued should all our earthly affections and activities be! Oh! this world is not a sphere in which the whole intensity of our love can safely be poured forth. Wherefore, unless to pierce ourselves with more and sharper sorrows, should we grasp with unrestricted ardour objects which may be wrested so early from our embrace, or from which we ourselves may be so speedily torn?

But if this world be not our rest, what then is it? The language suggests that it is a place of transit rather than of repose, a passage to a scene which lies further before us. It supposes—and the fact is so—that there is a world to come as well as a world that now is, and a future life to which the present is appointed to conduct us. There are, consequently, three lights in which this world may be practically regarded.

First, it is a sphere of preparation. The world to which we are going needs preparation. It is full of great and solemn objects, constituting a glorious heaven and an awful hell, and there is no safety in an entrance into it inconsiderate and unprepared. To dwell for ever with God in glory, or to suffer his everlasting frown, is an awful alternative, and our great business here is to secure for ourselves a favourable decision of it. Important as it may be to ask, What shall I eat, and what shall I drink, and wherewithal shall I be clothed, it is unspeakably more important to ask, What shall I do to be saved? It is to prepare for eternity that time is given, and before all things should we embrace the inestimable mercy of God set before us in the gospel, and flee for refuge from the wrath to come; for “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

Secondly, This world is a sphere of trial. If through the Lord Jesus it has been given us by the Holy Spirit to believe in his name, it remains that our graces be subjected to a course of trial, by which their sincerity may be proved, and God may be glorified. To such a purpose a state of things altogether happy would have had no adaptation. It needed a world of blended light and darkness, of mingled joy and grief, to supply the occasions by which our faith and patience should be put to the test. Amidst the changeful and mysterious events of life as it now is, God may be regarded as saying to his children—“Show how sincerely you love me,

and how perfectly you can trust me. Let it be seen how much you can give up at my bidding, how firmly you can trust my promise, and how submissive you can be under my rod." And it is thus we should endeavour to glorify him. "We may well deem it an honour to be placed in such a position as to glorify God in suffering, a prerogative which we share only with the blessed Son of God. Nor shall our faith and patience be without their recompense; for "the trial of our faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, shall be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ," 1 Peter i. 7.

Thirdly, This world is a sphere of service. God has much for us to do in it while we stay. He is waging a great controversy with the powers of darkness, and carrying out a glorious scheme of mercy for a guilty world. In this matter he wants our help, that is, he thinks fit to employ it in preference to any other kind of ministration. We are on the spot. We are qualified by his grace and Spirit to exercise a most beneficial influence. We are dispersed through the world in the various positions in which the influences emanating from us may be most usefully exercised. We thus form a part of the Lord's host, which consists of the "called, and chosen, and faithful," and have, under the Captain of our salvation, to fight the battle of his truth and love. For this cause are we to tarry awhile in this region of strife and trial. Here is required the influence of our example, the exercise of our liberality, the fruit of our lips. Shall these be required in vain? Ah! no. Redeeming mercy has laid us under obligations too vast for such a return of love to be refused.

Thus viewed, the world with all its mystery can, in part at least, be understood. As a sphere of preparation, of trial, and of service, it is appropriate that it should be what it is, and if our repose be not complete, at least our duty is plain. But is it to be always so? And is there to be no repose?

Yes! "There remaineth a rest," Heb. vi. 9. The very declaration that this is not our rest implies that in another region rest will be found.

"There remaineth a rest." But for whom? For all? No, not for all. For some, alas! there remains a house of sorrow, where they rest not day nor night from their piercing woe. For whom, then, is there rest? For all who will accept a title to it, and cultivate a meetness for it. A title to it is to be obtained freely by grace, through faith in our

Lord Jesus Christ ; and a meetness for it will result from the renewing and purifying power of faith on the heart. " Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it," Heb. iv. 1.

And where is this rest ? exclaims, perhaps, life's weary pilgrim. And when shall I reach it ? And what are its elements of bliss ?

The rest that remaineth is in heaven, beyond the confines of mortality, and in the immediate presence of God : there where Jesus dwells in glory, the Head of " the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven." And the time when you shall go there, weary pilgrim, is God's own time—not that dictated by your impatience, but that selected by his wisdom. • When you have done and borne all his will, and made all your destined contribution to his glory ; not too soon, so as to cut short your work on earth, nor too late, so as to lose any of the joys of heaven. But as to the elements of its blessedness we hold our peace ; for " Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," 1 Cor. ii. 9 ; but they that reach it shall be " for ever with the Lord," 1 Thess. iv. 17.

What a reconciling thought is this ! It is better, then, that this world is not our rest, but that our willing feet may go where it will be infinitely more happy to remain. Nor need we care now about this world's mysteries. Since we tarry not in it, but only make a hasty passage through it to a world all light and joy, let clouds and darkness, if so it please God, rest upon it. " Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," 2 Cor. iv. 17. *J. H. H.

THE FLOOD IN CORK.

THE morning of November 2nd, 1853, was in the city of Cork one of peculiar mildness and brightness for the season, the more cheering as it had been preceded by two gloomy days and nights of ceaseless rain. The spirits of almost every person must feel the exhilarating influence of such a change ; and on this day numbers of persons, either for business or pleasure, were abroad in the streets from an early hour.

Though a strong current was rushing through the different branches of the river Lee, which was swelled and turbid from the heavy fall of water, and though a good deal of injury was

reported to have been done by the flood in the neighbouring country, yet the lovely sunshine seemed to dispel all thoughts of danger or distress; and even when water rose in parts of the streets, it was attributed to a mere ordinary rise of the river after rain and a high tide. But He "who bindeth the floods, from overflowing" (Job xxviii. 11), who curbs by the word of his power all the wildest elements of nature, at times displays the same omnipotence, for mysterious purposes, in an opposite manner; and annulling the mandate, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further," gives apparently uncontrolled liberty to those creatures of his might, thrilling weak, helpless man with terror at their overwhelming fury.

Such an awful event occurred on this day, when about the hour of 1 A.M. a cry of horror and distress was heard—a large portion of the principal bridge of Cork had fallen a sudden and total ruin, torn down by the force of the torrent. In an instant the bridge, before crowded with human beings and their busy traffic to and fro, became a scene of desolation, and a dismayed multitude at each end were discussing the probable number of victims who, in a moment's time, had been buried out of sight in the waters. The same sudden rush from the distant mountains which caused this destruction poured on in a rising flood through many of the streets, compelling all who were out of doors to take refuge in the nearest houses, while the general dread still increased, and men's minds were afraid to conjecture where it might end. Apprehensions began to be felt lest some of the arched quays on which several of the streets are built should burst upwards from the force of the flood beneath them, causing a devastation from which the mind revolted in horror; but this mercifully was averted.

Through the Providence which still rules every motion of the universe, even when it seems obscured in clouds of wrath, the number of those hurried into eternity did not amount, it is believed, to twelve persons. It is well known that the side of the beautiful and secure-looking structure which gave way was just before more than usually crowded with persons looking at the rapid tide, when what the unreflecting would call "chance" caused that a ship moving round in the river, or, as some say, pieces of broken timber borne on by the flood, drew attention to the opposite side of the bridge, and numbers left the spot which in a few moments became a crushing ruin.

Many an anxious hour was spent by the relatives of those who were unable to return to their homes till the flood abated, and many had almost miraculous escapes from being on the

fatal bridge at the time of its fall—escapes which the subjects of them must remember, we trust with profit, till their dying day. And still, like the loveliness of nature smiling on the afflicted, the bright sunshine looked down in strange contrast on the terror-stricken countenances of men, and on the work of destruction which had occurred.

The above events are very generally known; but it may be feared that many, even of the eye-witnesses, have not reflected on the solemn lessons which it was no doubt intended to convey. Our Lord said of another destructive accident—"Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?" Luke xiii. 4. Let us also not think that those hurried before the bar of God in a moment were sinners singled out for punishment to the exclusion of the favoured number whose lives were preserved, but rather adopt our Lord's language, "Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish;" not, perhaps, by the fall of a bridge or tower, not by a sudden flood, but by a more fearful destruction, by a more abiding desolation, by the flood of God's wrath, when the wicked shall call on the mountains and rocks to fall, and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. What a powerful image of that wrath is presented by a wide-rushing sweep of waters, overturning the strongest works of man, and as little hindered in its course by human exertion as by an insect's web!

The same holy justice which destroyed with a flood the world of the ungodly, shall, "by the same word," pour a deluge of just and eternal indignation, "as a flood of mighty waters overflowing" (Isa. xxviii. 2), "on those that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Thess. i. 8. Oh, then, while it is yet time, cling to the Rock of Ages, and when the destruction of the wicked is at hand, "Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh thee;" and, justified by faith in Christ, you shall be borne triumphant and glorious in him, the Ark, to the haven of everlasting security, peace, and joy. X. Y. Z.

TRACT ANECDOTE.

THE HINDOO TRACT AND THE TRUE GOOROO.

Sommerfield (Prussia), 12th January, 1854.

I beg to annex a few particulars relating to the use of tracts distributed among the heathen in our Tirhoot mission, which will, I trust, prove acceptable to your friends at large.

In our Tirhoot mission there is a branch church, consisting of upwards of thirty souls, including children, who date their conversion partly from a tract which was given them by one of our missionaries in the year 1844, when he was on a missionary tour along the bank of a little river in the neighbourhood of their villages, about thirty-six miles distant from us. The first members and fathers of this little church were about that time in a great measure prepared for the reception of the truth under the direction of an old heathen gooroo (religious guide): they had already forsaken the worship of idols, and imbibed lax notions as to caste; but what to worship instead of idols the gooroo could not tell them, nor could he give them strength enough to break caste. He told them, however, that "the true Gooroo was still to come, and that at his appearance his Scriptures would run from house to house; and that his appearance might be looked for in their lifetime." This old gooroo, of the name of Bahoridas, died and left his disciples, our poor village weavers, in a state of expectation of the appearance of the true Gooroo. Just about this time two of our missionaries of Tirhoot happened to call at their villages, where they preached and distributed tracts to all who liked them, "without any distinction of caste."

All these circumstances attracted the attention of our weavers, and reminded them most vividly of the prophecy of their old gooroo; and when the brethren had left their village, their attention was at once directed to the tracts which the brethren had left in their hands: their desire to understand the tracts, however, was not so easily satisfied. The poor weavers could not read well; besides, the tracts were not written (as all their own books were), but printed, and in a kind of Hindu characters too, which they were not used to. One man amongst them has given us repeatedly an account of his attempts to manage to read the tract which he had received. He took the tract up a number of times, and tried hard to manage the letters and words, but threw it down again in despair of making it out. Still his desire to understand the little book was too great to admit of despair. He at length felt an unknown impulse to pray; but how? And to whom Christians pray he did not know. However, he stooped down, and uttered the following words in his heart: "Thou who hast caused this book to be written, if thou be the true Gooroo, help me to read and understand it." Certainly this was prayer; and He who hears the cry of the young ravens could not fail to answer the cry of a soul long-

ing after its God and Saviour. The man took up the tract again and again, and at last succeeded in reading it down to the bottom of the first page. He needed not to read more, for he was now convinced that this book contained the truth, and that he must now get up and find out the men who distributed such books. After having communicated his thoughts to his fellow inquirers, and kindled in them a similar desire, three of their number came to Moogufferpore, and had their first interview with the brethren, which led subsequently to repeated visits, and at last to the conversion of four men in two villages, who became the founders of a little church in the midst of a heathen district, and have proved sincere, able, and most useful means of propagating the gospel in their neighbourhood. The name of the one who managed to spell the tract was "Hanuman," now Anthoni; and the tract which proved the first means of directing him to Christ is still in his possession, and he means to keep it for a perpetual memorial.

A. STERNBERG, *Missionary.*

DIVINE MERCY.

FROM the recesses of a holy spirit
My humble prayer ascends; O Father, hear it
Upsoaring on the wings of fear and meekness,
Forgive its weakness.

I know, I feel, how mean and how unworthy
The trembling sacrifice I pour before thee;
What can I offer in thy presence holy
But sin and folly!

For in thy sight, who every bosom viewest,
Cold are our warmest vows, and vain our truest;
Thoughts of a hurrying hour, our lips repeat them,
Our hearts forget them.

We see thy hand, it leads and it supports us;
We hear thy voice, it counsels and it courts us;
And then we turn away, and still thy kindness
Pardons our blindness.

And still thy rain descends, thy sun is glowing,
Fruits ripen round, flowers are beneath us blowing,
And, as if man were some deserving creature,
Joys cover nature.

Oh! how long-suffering, Lord! But thou delightest
To win with love the wandering. Thou invitest,
By smiles of mercy, not by pains or terrors,
Man from his errors.

Sabeans had entered his fields, stolen his oxen, and slain his servants; and then another came to say that there had been a storm, and that the lightning had scorched the sheep and the shepherds too, and killed them all; and then a third came, saying, that the Chaldeans had attacked the camels and their drivers; and last and worst, there came one to tell that the house where his sons and daughters were feasting had been smitten with a blast, and thrown down to the ground, the festive inmates being all at once crushed in the ruins. This was enough to break the heart of one destitute of faith and hope in God. But Job bore it all with a patience that has made his name memorable ever since, and has rendered him a worthy example even to Christians, whose religion is pre-eminently a religion of patience.

The beautiful poem which records his history and conversations brings him most vividly before our eyes, and we see him reduced to poverty, bereft of his children, reproached by his wife, diseased from head to foot, sitting down among ashes, and scraping himself with a potsherd. There he is—upon the outskirts of that rocky region, so busy and well peopled, through whose street-like ravines he had walked as a neighbour prince, receiving the eastern homage of the inhabitants, now reduced to indigence, and forsaken by those who once courted his smiles, hiding himself in some sequestered corner of his agricultural domains, to mourn in silence over his heavy griefs. The tide of prosperity has ebbed, and left his vessel dry and broken on the stony beach.

Three men called "friends" do indeed come to see him, and as they approach they lift up their eyes, appalled at the spectacle of one so reduced and desolate, and rending every man his mantle, and sprinkling dust upon their heads in eastern fashion, they sit down beside him on the earth for awhile in silence. At length they enter into earnest conversation, and though the echo of their voices died away 3500 years ago, their thoughts and words still live. Thousands and myriads of colloquies held in the old world, in patriarchal tents, and Idumean cities, have been long, long forgotten; but here in the book of Job we have one discussion, which will be preserved as long as the world lasts for the instruction of mankind.

The three friends were inhabitants of the same region with himself. They dwelt in towns scattered over the district. The first who spoke was Eliphaz, a native of Teman, a place of great repute, renowned for proverbial wisdom. He was a man of thought, skilled in argument, and cool in temper.

Though reproving Job for incautious expressions which he had employed, he showed less of severity towards the heavily afflicted man than did either of his companions. The second of these persons was Bildad of Shuah, a city of Edom, a man of haughty disposition and passionate temper, a stranger to sympathy and tenderness; and while inferior to Eliphaz in social qualities, he was no less so in intellectual strength, being accustomed not so much to reason, as to intrench himself behind the proverbs of an earlier age. The third was Zophar, a native of Naama, who evinced a spirit similar to that of Bildad, and dealt in rough and violent invective, building much on traditionary wisdom, yet often clothing his thoughts in poetical figures and forcible language. They were probably all of them men strict and stern in their morals, for in the course of their bitter reproaches, Job never retaliates, never casts any imputation on their names; while, also, it is plain that a tone of virtuous and upright feeling pervades their observations. They belonged to that class which while it is marked by the greatest moral decorum, and is nursed in the lap of prosperity, has no pity for the calamities of men, and is always disposed to attribute them entirely to imprudence and sin. The unmerciful accusations, the cruel taunts with which these companions of the patriarch tore open afresh his lacerated bosom, one hardly knows how to reconcile with their conduct, when they first came expressing their friendship and tendering their condolence.

It is interesting here to pause for a moment, and examine into the religious opinions of these remarkable persons. The discourse of the three friends abounds in allusions to the being, majesty, and perfections of God, and to the universality of his providence and care; they were what we might term sound Theists; and further, they admitted the sinfulness of humanity, nor did they fail to recognise the fact of Divine inspiration for the instruction and warning of the children of men. Indeed, Eliphaz describes himself as being visited by a supernatural spectral appearance, from which he received a solemn and salutary warning. But in the observations made by these individuals there are no references to a future state, or to the doctrine of propitiation. Their views were narrow. They limited their notions of God's moral government to the present world. They confined rewards and punishments to this life. They made everything of the tendencies of vice and virtue *here*. They endeavoured to prove that in this world man is treated according to his deserts, and upon this principle they

concluded that Job was unrighteous, and arrayed the providence of God against him as an evidence of his guilt. Amidst their many noble descriptions of the Deity, and their numerous important moral maxims, there is great defectiveness of view, and there are also grave fundamental errors. Hence, though they may be described as something more than deists, they must be regarded as not holding those peculiarities of faith, which have ever distinguished spiritual religion, and which now, so fully developed in the New Testament, constitute the strength and beauty of evangelical theology.

A fourth visitor is introduced, whose sentiments were far in advance of the other three. This was Elihu, an inhabitant of Buz, a town bordering on Idumea. He does not appear to have come with the rest to condole with Job, but to have accidentally dropped in during the progress of the discussion. Having become interested in the debate, he expresses his own opinion, thus availing himself of a liberty of interference, readily conceded, and characteristic of the country in which the scene of the book is laid. He takes much higher ground than the rest, and grapples with Job's arguments in a powerful manner. He dilates on the perfections of God, and admits the mysteriousness of Providence; and in the memorable passage respecting the intercessor and the ransom, indicates some knowledge and belief of a system of mediation between God and man, as a ground of mercy. And it should be observed, that in the sentence delivered by the Almighty at the end of the conflict, while Eliphaz and his two friends are condemned, no censure is passed upon Elihu.

While we listen to the patriarch himself and weigh his words, we find that he was a firm believer in all the scriptural doctrines we have noticed. He did not take the narrow views of his friends, but saw and felt how mankind do not receive in the present life according to their character; that the innocent are oppressed and the guilty escape. Yet he acknowledged the perfections of the Divine nature, and looked forward to a future state when he would be delivered from the sorrows and evils of his mortal existence, and behold and enjoy the vision of God. And if he did not expressly refer to the principle of atonement, yet he practically recognised it in the offering of sacrifice. Nor should we omit to observe, that, associated with his just religious sentiments, there was a large measure of benevolence towards men as well as reverence towards God. From allusions to his past history, called forth by the accusations of his acquaintances, he appears to have been a model of

generosity no less than of uprightness; and as we listen to his impassioned self-defence, we behold him going out at the city gate, while the youthful and aged gather there, according to the custom of the country, to rise up and express their veneration; we follow him as he searches out the oppressed and the sorrowful, vindicating their cause and relieving their wants, and we catch an echo of the benedictions pronounced on his name by the widow and the fatherless, whose hearts he has caused to sing for joy. Before him princes might well refrain from talking, and nobles hold their peace, for his piety and virtues conferred on him rank, and clothed him in majesty incomparably superior to theirs.

We have touched on Job's theology, but we further see that in his trials his faith had to struggle for victory and even existence. As, in a tempest, the heavens are darkened and the ocean heaves, the lightnings flash and the thunders roar, and now the vessel descends into the abyss and now it mounts up to the clouds;—as an interval of calm may come amidst the strife, and the clouds may open and reveal the fair blue sky, only to close again and make the darkness more terrific; and as at length the storm subsides, and there is quietude and peace, so did the thoughts and feelings of Job pass through fearful states of doubt, suspense, and agony, succeeded by intervals of faith, patience, and repose, followed again by conflict, to end in humility, confidence, and joy. He who cursed the day of his birth, at length quieted his soul like “a child weaned of his mother,” and could say, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him;” and he who thought of the grave as a land of darkness where there was no light, also exclaimed, “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.”

And so, in hours of melancholy, sensitive minds have often almost been paralyzed, and had their grasp of truth shaken and relaxed, only, however, to seize it more eagerly, and to hold it more firmly when the season of bewildering anguish has passed away. Mental depression and painful strugglings of the soul, as it contends with the actual difficulties of life, and the speculative difficulties of religion, are not inconsistent with genuine piety; and the case of Job stands on record to encourage and console those who, like himself, have in this life to walk through “the valley of the shadow of death.” Whatever may be the temporal issue of trials, whether or not

calamities be followed at our eventide by the outbreking of the sunlight of prosperity, sure of one thing we are—that to the children of God the result of all affliction here will be glorious in another world; that when their loving Father has tried them, they shall come forth like gold; and that, in the very sublimest sense, their captivity shall be turned, and their latter end shall be blessed of the Lord more than their beginning.

J. S.

THE ROCK OF SAFETY.

ONE very warm afternoon in summer, a family consisting of a lady and gentleman, their five little children and governess, and a baby in the arms of its nurse, were loitering along the beautiful sand on a south sea-shore. They had recently come to reside in a pretty village about two miles inland, and now, after a wandering excursion, and dining among the rocks, were on their way home, anxious to enjoy the shore as long as possible, and knowing that at some little distance beyond, a road turned off between the cliffs towards their village, which they expected to reach before sunset.

The young party were in high spirits, and every shell had its own peculiar charm, as it was cleaned and added to the treasures in the little baskets. The clusters of seaweed were minutely examined, because grandmamma had told the children of a lady who once found a gold watch and chain twisted among seaweed. "Not that I wish very much to find a watch," remarked one of the little girls, "because it would most likely be washed up from some wreck, and I don't like to think of anything so dreadful in such a pretty place as this; but if there happened to be such a thing, we might as well find it as some of the fishermen."

Everything attracted the stay of the happy party; a refreshing breeze from the ocean, which lay in golden glory beneath the sunshine—the wide expanse broken only by a rocky island crowned with a ruined castle, a few miles from the mainland; the shining sand in which myriads of coloured shells made a fairy pavement for their feet; the glee of the children, the quieter pleasure of their parents—all contributed to slacken their steps and to make them desire to prolong their enjoyment.

Some one presently remarked that the tide was rising, when the children flew to the very ridge of sand which the last rippling wave had moistened, and planting a row of little

feet along the water's frothy edge, began to personate king Canute, and commanded the ocean to advance no further. Their decrees, however, meeting with no more attention than those of royal authority, they were speedily obliged to retreat with wetted toes, shouting with delight at the triumphs of the sea, and their own defeat. Just then, papa, who was a little in advance of the rest, was met by a fisherman, who stopped civilly, and looking towards the children, said "You'd better make all the haste you can, to get round yon rock, for the tide will be up there directly, and the sand hereabouts is very deceitful, so that it won't be safe to wade round after the water's over it."

Mr. and Mrs. C— thanked the fisherman for his kindness in warning them, and the children were hastening to look at the curious net that was laid across his shoulders, when papa's voice calling loudly to them to hasten on, gave a different turn to their thoughts.

"Ay, ay," said the fisherman, "run as fast as you can, or it won't be so well for you soon. I wonder how you come to be here so long after tide-turn." Away rushed the children with all possible speed. Sand, shells, seaweed, sunshine, were all forgotten, and the rising waves, so lately a source of the merriest pleasure, suddenly became objects of dismay and terror.

Mr. C— blamed himself extremely for not having noticed the turn of the tide, or made himself aware of the height to which it rose at high water. He looked back, but no safety seemed there, for the tide might also reach some of the range of rocks they had already passed, and if so, turning back would only make a bad case worse; so he exerted his efforts to urge forward the little weary feet, and saw with pain how soon the lately joyous party were dispirited and cast down. As for poor nurse, though often kindly relieved of her charge, she had nearly sat down several times in despair by the way, until the dread of being drowned again made her consider it advisable to hasten on without further complaints on the subject.

At last they approached the rock pointed out by the fisherman, stretching down in a rough and craggy slope towards the sea, and shutting out all view behind it by a lofty frowning cliff. Papa's quick eye at once perceived that the water had reached its point.

"On, on, my children, for your lives!" he cried, as he caught the youngest in his arms, and scrambled up the lowest

yet uncovered part of the rough crag. The poor children began to cry, and mamma and the governess looked very grave and anxious; but there was no time to think, every one had to act, and never were scratches and bruises received with so good a grace. Between pushes from below, and pulls from above, the children were dragged safely up into the cavities of the rock above water, and the rest of the party followed with much difficulty. Then they had to descend on the other side, which was scarcely less difficult, but seeing a broad margin of sand before them with no further impediment to their progress, they were revived by hopes of safety, and soon turned off from the sea-shore, bidding rocks and waves good night, with a satisfaction they would not have believed possible an hour before.

Now it was certainly wise in this family not to reject or disregard the warning of the fisherman, and yet many people show no such wisdom in matters of much greater consequence. "What!" you may be in a hurry to say, "could anything be of more consequence than the lives of a whole family who must have been drowned if they had not reached the rock in time to scramble over it?" Yes, truly; for their several lives would not probably have reached more than seventy or eighty years, and some far more dreadful thing is often happening to immortal souls who will not take warning at all, but stay playing and amusing themselves on the brink of ruin and misery, until death suddenly cuts off their escape, and they are lost through their own wilfulness.

Perhaps there is not a man, or woman, or boy, or girl, who is not met at some time in their little histories, whether on excursions of pleasure, or in the employments of daily life, by warning and advice, telling them of danger near at hand, of the power of a destroyer, and of a rock, on which, if they reach it in time, they may be safe and happy. You have seen that even little children could run when they were told of danger to their bodies; they did not stop, nor their parents either, to question the man whether he knew for certain that what he said was true; neither did they laugh at him, and say, "Oh, perhaps some people may have been foolish enough to get drowned, but we know how to take better care of ourselves; we shall easily get out of the reach of danger any way we please, if it should happen that there really is any at all." No, they were told of but one way to escape, and off they went to find it. They saw that the tide was really rising, and believed the rest. They reached the rock and

were saved. Those who are most anxious to warn others of danger to their souls, usually know the truth of what they say, from having seen the peril in which they themselves were and direct to the only way of escape which they have found. Once they loitered like children on the shore, amusing themselves with all kinds of pleasant things that were put in their way to make them forget how time was flying, and danger advancing. This is Satan's work, who hates any one to hear and heed a friendly warning. But the fishermen of Galilee were commissioned with a message of mercy to sound in every ear. "Young men and maidens, old men and children," are called from the trifles and toys of this world, to fly to "the Rock that is higher" than they, to "trust in the Rock of ages," and escape the wrath of God that "is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." This Rock is Christ, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification: "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance and forgiveness of sins;" "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved;" for "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin;" and "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ is unto all and upon all them that believe." The Lord "is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.—In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God."

Why does not every body run to it and be safe? Because of unbelief. The reason why any sinner who hears the gospel can be lost is, not because he is a sinner, but because he will not come unto Jesus, nor obey the great command of God, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, "the way, the truth, and the life;" for "no man cometh unto the Father, but by him," and "he that cometh shall in nowise be cast out."

It is a pleasant and a happy thing to see the feet of little children bearing them away from every danger to stand in safety on the Rock of salvation. The hand that made the way will lift them up, and take them home at last. B. T.

HIGHER AND HIGHER.

THERE is in the writings of a popular American poet a beautiful lyric, entitled *Excelsior*. He represents a youth

with sad and thoughtful brow, and his eye flashing as a falchion from its sheath, passing, as the shades of night are falling fast, through an Alpine village. A banner is in his hand, bearing the device *Excelsior*, meaning higher; and ever from his lips, like a silver clarion, there rings the cry, *Excelsior*. Above him is the dangerous mountain path, overhung by threatening glaciers, which he is evidently resolved to attempt. Gleaming household fires, the emblems of domestic enjoyment and comfort, tempt him to stay; and it is with a groan that he turns away from the sight, and still directs his steps to the mountain side. An aged man entreats him not to try the pass, warning him of the gathering tempest and the roaring torrent, by which he may be swept away, but still he presses on with the cry, *Excelsior*. A maiden implores him to remain. The tear stands in his eye as he breaks away and reiterates his watchword, *Excelsior*. A peasant points out a particular spot where danger may be feared, and where the descending avalanche may involve him in destruction; but the only answer is the repeated cry which comes from far up the height. As the monks of St. Bernard are chanting their prayers at early morn, they are startled by the sound which tells them that some ill-fated traveller has lost his way. Setting forth with their faithful hounds, one of them finds him dead, and half-buried in the snow, still grasping in his hand the banner with its strange device, whilst from the sky there falls a voice calm and sweet, and its note is still, *Excelsior*. The import of the poem is obvious. It describes a youth, full of ardent aspirations after distinction, beholding above him heights of fame and glory which he is resolved to reach, and pressing onward in spite alike of the charms of domestic enjoyments, the counsels of age, the blandishments of love, and the lessons of experience, and perishing in the attempt; yet leaving behind him an example which seems to speak as a voice from the skies, and to urge upon those who are still fighting the battle of life, a lesson of energetic and untiring aspiration.

It describes the course of multitudes. The student, for instance, resolves that he will spare no pains to secure the prize of literary distinction; the poet seeks to weave for himself a garland of immortal verse; and the soldier pants for those laurels which he thinks will flourish over his tomb, when the brow around which they were entwined is mouldering beneath. We may deplore the misdirection of energy, and weep as we see the eager aspirant sink into an untimely

grave ; but we cannot help admiring the self-denying ardour which bears the spirit onward, and which makes even death itself a thing to be braved and despised, in comparison with the attainment of its cherished object.

There are nobler aspirations than any which are earthly. The Christian is taught to fix his eye on the loftiest attainments of spiritual excellence, and strive after them ; and the energy which is directed to far inferior things may be a lesson to him who has inscribed on his banner the true Excelsior.

What is it to which the Christian is to aspire ? It is as a child of God by faith in Christ ; by the indwelling and power of the Holy Spirit, to be like God—to resemble him in every respect in which it is possible for us to be like him. It is to have everything that is wrong repressed and eradicated, and everything that is really right and beautiful developed in our spirit and demeanour. It is not to have some one excellence developed ; whilst others are neglected ; it is to have all developed harmoniously. The growth of Christian character is not to be that of the statue, one part of which may be a beautiful work of art, whilst the other is little more than a shapeless mass : it is to be rather the growth of life. The plant represents it ; “ first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear,” but all its parts growing harmoniously. The human body represents it. The internal life exerts its power on every limb and feature at the same time, else there would be deformity instead of symmetry. So the inner life of faith is to display itself in everything that is “ true, and honest, and lovely, and of good report.”

No man is to be discouraged if at the commencement of his Christian course he does not find himself at once everything that he could wish, any more than the child is discouraged because he finds himself far inferior to persons of mature age, or any more than the youthful soldier is discouraged because he finds himself as yet unequal to those who have been victorious in many a fight. He should be humbled and dissatisfied on account of imperfection and sin, but never discouraged. Through our sinful imperfection, it is not the course of the spiritual life that the renewed heart be perfect at once. The believer in Christ is to “ grow up into him in all things, which is the head,” and he is to believe it possible that he may resemble those who have seemed so far beyond him, that he could hardly venture to hope that he should ever exemplify such worth as theirs. The power which has wrought so mightily in them, can work as mightily in him.

Nor is any one to say, I have attained such a height of perfection that all further advance is needless. Even an inspired apostle was constrained to say, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." To every one of us spiritual progress is to be the object of earnest personal endeavour. Our most vigorous energies should be engaged in the pursuit. There is one figure which the apostle Paul frequently employs, that of a racer, which finely suggests the idea of the most intense and continued effort. There is a remark in the memoirs of a late distinguished painter, to the effect that as soon as an artist ceases to struggle he ceases to excel. It is not less true of the soul. The moment we become careless about Christian progress and relax our efforts, that moment we begin to decline.

How then is this energy to be employed? We must guard against whatever interferes with progress. Undue absorption in the concerns of the world may prove a hindrance. Even the facilities which in these times are afforded so largely to literary culture and enjoyment may be perverted into a snare. We must watch, lest what is lawful in itself should thus by the undue attention we give to it become an evil. But especially must we watch against what is positively sinful. One besetting sin may neutralize all our privileges, and throw us down bruised and bleeding in our course. George Herbert, after an enumeration of the safeguards with which God has begirt us round—parents, instructors, bibles, afflictions, and many things besides—says, very truly,

"Yet all these fences, and their whole array.
One cunning bosom sin blows quite away."

There is no spiritual progress without the truth. Faith, which is the fundamental grace of all, can only be quickened and increased by the study of the truth. It is the man whose "delight is in the law of the Lord," who is as a tree planted by the rivers of water, and who "bringeth forth his fruit in his season." It is he who "desires the sincere milk of the word," who "grows thereby." Other books may be of great service, but only in subordination to the Bible. He who would secure true spiritual advancement must be a diligent student of the word of God.

And there must be prayer. The truth can profit us only as it is applied by the Spirit. Those excellences, which in their combination form the Christian character, are all the fruit of the Spirit. And the Spirit can be obtained only in

answer to prayer. The men whom we have most admired as models of Christian excellence, the men whose graces seemed to expand in our very sight, have been the men who were most habitual and earnest in prayer.

It ought to be enough that God commands us to aim at the highest attainments. But it is an additional motive that our happiness depends upon it. "To be spiritually minded is life and peace." The path may be sometimes toilsome; but still it has its joys. Even where duty is most difficult, the Christian is cheered by the testimony of a good conscience and the approval of Heaven. And just as the traveller amidst mountain scenery may come, after a laborious ascent, to some upland vale, redolent with the perfume of fragrant flowers, and bright in the fairest beauty, in passing along which he is repaid for his toil and nerved for the ascent which is yet before him, so there are sweet spots in the Christian's upward journey, in which it is as though he heard the voice of Divine mercy bidding him, Rest awhile—sabbaths of peculiar enjoyment; communion services in which Christ seems to be specially present; and hours of secret and social devotion when heaven seems to have begun below. The higher the tone of that Christian character, the greater the degree in which we shall secure such enjoyment as this.

And this is a struggle in which, if it be conducted aright, there can be no failure, and no death. The prize which is coveted by the aspirant after earthly distinction often falls from his grasp just as he thinks himself sure of its enjoyment; or he perishes before he attains it, or if attained he finds it worthless. The prize which is set before the Christian is a crown of life, which fadeth not away; and it is given, not to one only, but to all who love and serve their Lord.

Inspired by such motives, let our motto be the true Excelsior—higher and higher in love to God and man, and in every Christian grace.

S. G.

THE CHANNEL FLEET.

"WELL! school is over: what shall we do with ourselves till it is time to go home to dinner?" said Harry to his brother, as the bell announced the joyful event, and boys issued forth in merry groups from the door of a seminary in Cork one fine day. James replied, "Let us go to the top of Patrick's-hill and have a walk in the fields." "A good thought: I will go with you," cried one of their school-

fellows. Harry agreed, but James took the first opportunity of whispering to him as they went along the street. "Papa desired us not to form any intimacy with Sellon. He said he had reason to fear that he was not a good boy. Let us change our minds and go to visit uncle."

"Nonsense, James; surely we may walk together without forming an intimacy. Besides, he is the cleverest and pleasantest boy in the school, and we want something pleasant after moping all day over Greek and Latin. Uncle will do nothing but examine us in Homer and Horace if we visit him." And Harry entered into conversation with their companion to put an end to James's expostulations.

They soon reached the summit of the hill, and were enjoying the extensive prospect and fresh air, when they heard the sound of cannonading at a distance. "It is the channel fleet!" exclaimed Sellon, clapping his hands. "The fleet that the queen lately reviewed, and it is coming into Queens-town—the greatest number of men-of-war, and the finest sight that ever were seen there."

"Oh! how I should like to see it," cried Harry.

"And what is to hinder you? One of the river-steamers will start at four; we shall be at the quay in time for it if we hurry, and we may get a look at the fleet, and be home for dinner at six o'clock. Will you come, boys?"

"Certainly not without papa's leave," answered James.

"If you wait for that you are likely never to see the fleet," observed Sellon. "Your papa is so religious and precise in his notions, that he will object to it as he did to your going to the regatta."

"The regatta promotes gambling and other things which papa disapproves of," said James, "but this is a different matter; I am sure he will have no objection to our going on this occasion."

"Then if you are sure, why not come now? The fleet may be off again before to-morrow; nobody knows how soon they will go away. You will be home at six, and need not tell where you have been."

"That would be adding deceit to disobedience," said James. "Pray, Harry, consider what you are about," for they were now rapidly descending the hill, and not far from the quay whence the steamer started.

"Do you hear him? What a fine preacher he would make! I will repeat his sermon on deceit and disobedience, as he calls them, to the schoolboys to-morrow." And Sellon

laughed heartily. James had a great dread of ridicule; he coloured deeply, particularly when his schoolfellow added, "How absurd to see boys like you treated as babies in leading-strings! But hurry, that is the bell, the steamer is just off."

They were now on the spot; Sellon hastened over the gangway, and Harry's foot was on it to follow, though he had an expression of fear and hesitation in his countenance. James caught his arm and began to expostulate. "Come back, Harry, it is very wrong." But a crowd eager to embark pressed from behind and pushed them both on till they stood upon the deck. In a few moments they were under weigh, moving swiftly down the river to Queenstown.

If Harry felt any fear or compunction at this act of undutifulness towards his kind parents, he took care to conceal it lest his companion should consider it unmanly, and talked and laughed away merrily during the first part of the voyage; but James, though not so much to blame, had no enjoyment, so true it is that when the mind is once, by Divine grace, enlightened to the discernment of what is right, there cannot be any real pleasure without "a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men," Acts xxiv. 16. This boy possessed a talent for drawing, and had heretofore always delighted in an opportunity of looking at the beautiful scenery on the banks of the river Lee, and in taking sketches from it; but groves and lawns were all unheeded now as he passed along, so absorbed was his mind by the painful reflection that he was disobeying his indulgent father, who, he knew, was always ready to gratify his children in every way that was reasonable and proper. "We ought not to have distrusted papa; he would certainly have brought us to see the fleet as soon as he could; and even if it did sail before he was able to do so, it would be far better to have missed the sight than to have displeased him."

James addressed these words to Harry, who had now had some time for reflection, while Sellon was amusing himself in another part of the boat. "Well, James, I do believe you are right," he replied with a sigh, "and we have been wrong."

"Papa will not feel confidence in us any longer, and that is very painful," observed James, responding the sigh.

"It is; but he need not know it. We shall get home in time for dinner, and he may not ask where we have been, or if he should, we can say that we took a walk to the top of the hill, which is, you know, perfectly true."

"True; yes, but not the whole truth," replied his brother, whose conscience at once pointed out to him that concealment in this case would involve the guilt of deceit. Still the idea of losing his father's good opinion made him so unhappy that he almost resolved upon acceding to Harry's proposal. At last they entered the harbour, and eagerly looked out for the fleet, but as all the passengers crowded to the part of the boat from whence it could best be seen, the boys could not get a glimpse over the heads of taller persons. However, on reaching the landing-place it soon appeared that there was little to be seen. The greater part of the fleet was still outside the harbour's mouth; and the few men-of-war which had come in were anchored too far off to be distinctly seen. "But they will all be in to-morrow, and a fine sight it will be," was heard on every side.

The passengers were not long in landing, and a new set crowded on board, when the steamer was off again on her return, but not before the boys had perceived, to their great consternation, that among those who had just got on the deck was their father. There were such numbers on board, that they could easily avoid letting him see them; but their voyage back was a very uncomfortable one, and when it ended they contrived to be among the first who got on shore, that they might be at home before him; acting on Sellon's suggestion, who also said, "See how your papa likes a little pleasure himself. How quietly he went off to see the fleet without saying anything about it."

James was about to defend his father from the accusation of selfishness implied in these words, but Harry hurried him away; and they reached home, observing, "Well! it was strange that papa should go off in that way. He certainly might have taken us with him."

They got into the house some minutes before their father, and the family met at dinner immediately after. "What kept you so late, boys?" inquired their mother; "I was beginning to feel uneasy about you."

"We went to the top of the hill to have a walk," Harry replied, colouring a little; but James hung down his head, and seemed to be very busy with his plate.

"I thought I saw you both running along the quay as I was getting out of the steamer," said their father. "I was unexpectedly obliged to go down to Queenstown this morning; and, by the way, have very pleasant news for you all," smiling as he looked round the table at his children, "which

I will tell you when we have dined." As soon as the dessert appeared he was called upon for his pleasant news.

"You know," he said, "that the great fleet has been expected in the harbour. A few of the men-of-war arrived to-day, but they will all be in this evening or early to-morrow. I intend (if the Lord will) to take you, my dear children, and your mamma, to see them. The steam-boats will be disagreeably crowded on account of the number of people going to see the great sight, so a friend of mine has kindly promised to bring his yacht for us, which will be far pleasanter, as we shall have, what you, boys, have been longing for, a fine sail; and we can go about among the ships and view them at our leisure. We are to have a cold dinner at a beautiful spot on the shore; and better than all, we are to go on board the Duke of Wellington, the largest ship-of-war in the world. One of the officers is my cousin, and will show us everything worth seeing in the vessel. We are to embark at ten, and I trust, my darlings, you will spend a delightful day."

The girls and youngest brother received this intelligence with acclamations of joy, and their mother looked highly pleased; but it was soon observed that Harry seemed confused, and James hid his face with his hands.

"What is the matter, boys?" asked their mother.

James burst into tears. "Oh, mamma! papa! I will tell you all; though you cannot forgive us, and we shall lose your esteem for ever." As well as his sobs would allow, he then briefly related their adventures. Their parents looked very grave, and their father said, "You have indeed, boys, acted ill, and —"

But Harry interrupted him, "No, papa, not James—it was all my fault—James did all he could to prevent it." He then told how his brother had tried to hinder the walk with Sellon, the embarkation on board the steamer, and every other circumstance likely to extenuate James's conduct.

"It is some relief to my mind," said their father, "to find that James was not deliberately guilty of disobedience and deceit; but his fault is indecision. Remember my son, that 'he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed,' James i. 6. There is little use in your having good principles if you do not act on them."

"I know I was very weak, papa," cried the weeping boy. "Oh that I may be more wise in future!"

"Well, my son, the apostle whom I have just quoted says

also, 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally,' James i. 5. Had you resisted what may have seemed but a trifling act of disobedience—associating with that poor boy whom I had reason to fear was badly brought up—you would have saved yourself and your brother from the guilt of falsehood."

"We did not tell a lie, papa," said Harry.

"Not directly, but you said what was intended to deceive. Oh! remember what is said of him 'that maketh a lie,' Rev. xxii. 15. We cannot take you with us to-morrow, my sons, though our own enjoyment will be greatly diminished by going without you; but I hope the disappointment may impress the lesson upon your minds, that by yielding to a slight temptation you have been led into a grievous error;—have lost the very pleasure you sacrificed your integrity to gain—have hurt and offended your kind parents; and, worst of all, have broken God's commandments. May you deeply feel this, and seek his pardon through his dear Son, 'in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins,'" Col. i. 14.

E. F. G.

PERILS IN THE WILDERNESS.

IN the deep seclusion of one of those extensive forests that overspread the "far, far west" of the United States of America, there dwelt an industrious family which, after undergoing the usual hardships and privations of the settler's beginning, had succeeded in clearing a few acres of the woodland, and establishing themselves in comparative comfort. The rude shanty, which had, for the first years of their residence, sheltered them from the weather, had given place to a comfortable log-house; and to this, within the last few months, was added a frame barn, which was in progress of erection at the time the circumstance, about to be related, occurred. These buildings were situated at the edge of the wood, and in the front of them lay the patch of cleared land, bounded by the dense forest which extended for many miles all around.

The mother of this family was a stirring, active woman, who brought up her children in habits of industry and thrift, but having no ideas beyond making the best of everything in this world, thought she fully discharged her duty to them in training them to work their way well through it. She was anxious that they should prosper in time, but took no care for eternity, either for them or herself. And thus labouring for "the

meat which perisheth," she thought not of the meat "which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give." But the time was at hand which should startle her from her dream of worldliness into an awful sense of the realities which she had hitherto disregarded.

One cold night, towards the close of autumn, she remained in her kitchen, after her husband and children retired to rest, engaged in some preparations for the next day's business. The fire being low, she went out to the barn before mentioned for the purpose of gathering a supply of the carpenter's chips which lay thickly scattered round it. The night was cloudless, and the moon was at the full, and at such times, from the clearness and purity of the atmosphere in that climate, every object appears as distinct as at noonday. She filled her basket with chips, and as she raised it from the ground, she cast a careless glance across the clearing towards the opposite forest. To her great terror she saw an animal, which her practised eye at once discerned to be a panther of the largest size, spring from among the trees, and bound towards her. She instantly dropped her load, and fled with almost supernatural speed to the house. As she drew near the door, which providentially she had left open, she heard the steps of her fierce pursuer rattling over the chips she had just quitted. She gave herself up for lost, but exerting all her strength, dashed into the house, and flung the door to. Happily it had a strong latch which instantly sank into its groove, and thus her life was saved: another moment, and she would have been lost. For the beast had just taken his fatal spring, and as the door closed he came against it with such force that he fell back half stunned to the ground.

The husband, being roused by the noise, came from his room, and found his wife lying almost senseless on the floor. She was just able to point to the window, and on looking out, he saw the panther struggling to rise. As the settlers in that wild country always have their rifles at hand, it was but the work of a moment for the man to seize and discharge it from the window; and he had the satisfaction to see the beast fall back, with a terrific howl, to the ground. A second shot dispatched it. The enemy being thus disposed of, the man had time to turn his attention to his wife, whom he raised to a chair; and by the application of such simple remedies as he had at hand, soon succeeded in reviving her, so that she was able to relate what had happened, which she did with much agitation, and many tears. After she was somewhat composed, he

advised her to go to rest, but she begged him to leave her alone, for she could not lie down until she had knelt to return thanks to that God who had so mercifully saved her from so fearful a fate. Her husband accordingly retired. She sank upon her knees, and though she could find little utterance but in sobs and groans, it seemed as if her heart so long hardened in worldliness was thoroughly awakened to a sense of her sinfulness. She had in early life been under the teaching of a pious mother, and many a precious word of Scripture, long forgotten, came thronging on her mind. Conscience, which had hitherto slumbered, was now effectually roused, and acknowledgment of her guilt and supplications for pardon through the blood of that dear Saviour whom she had so long neglected, were mingled with her broken efforts at thanksgiving. At last, exhausted in body and mind, she retired to bed; but the multitude of her thoughts within her permitted her not to sleep, and many were the resolves she made that the life which had been so mercifully preserved, should henceforward be devoted to the service of Him who had thus kindly dealt with her.

When morning came, great was the excitement among the children on learning the event of the preceding night, and many were the questions they put, as with eager curiosity they gazed on the panther, fierce-looking even in death. When at length they were gathered round the breakfast table, they still continued their prattle of wonderment and fear. But at last one little girl who had been silent for some time said, "Mother, where would you be now if the panther had killed you?" The mother only shook her head; whereupon the child said, "Mother, isn't there a place where good people go, and another where bad people go, when they die?"

"There is, Betsy, there is."

"And is God in the good place, mother?"

"God is everywhere," replied the mother, with a lively recollection of her late deliverance.

"But will God let us go to him if we are not good?"

"None of us are good, Betsy; but God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16.

"Oh, mother," said the child, "I wish you would teach me to believe on him."

"I can tell you of him, Betsy, but the Holy Spirit only can teach you to believe on him, and God has promised to give his Holy Spirit to them who pray for it."

"But oh, mother, why did you never tell us so before?"

The mother burst into tears and answered, "Because I am a wicked sinner, and took no care for your souls or my own; but, by the grace of God helping me, it shall be so no longer."

From that day Mrs. J. was an altered person. She was assiduous as ever in her domestic duties, for they were her duties; but they were no longer her chief care. She sought to glorify God in them, and earnestly asking the guidance of his Holy Spirit, she laboured to bring up her children in the knowledge of the Lord; so that in the great day when he should be making up his jewels, not one of those entrusted to her charge might be wanting.

And we have all an enemy more fierce, more subtle, and more insatiable than any earthly foe. From him no door of our own framing can secure us. But, blessed be God, there is a door ever open to us by which we are invited to enter: "The righteous runneth into it, and is safe," Prov. xviii. 10. The Lord Jesus Christ says, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." Oh, delay no more, parley no longer with sin, lest he swear in his wrath that ye shall not enter in this rest. Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near. And whatever dangers or temptations may assail you in this transitory scene, you will find him a sure, an everlasting refuge.

"Though weak our best resolves may be,
There's mercy, Lord, and strength in thee,

Our fainting steps to keep.

Thou who hast trod life's thorny path,

And drained the bitter cup of wrath,

Wilt guard thy helpless sheep.

Life is a frail, uncertain bark;

Thou, only thou, the sheltering Ark,

When Satan fierce pursues;

Then let us to that shelter flee,

And find a sure defence in Thee,

From all our deadly foes.

J. E. L.

ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

A SHORT COMMENT, AFFECTIONATELY ADDRESSED TO THE PRIESTS AND MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM MARSH, D.D.

IN the opening of the Epistle, the apostle assigns, as his reason for not being ashamed of the gospel of Christ, that "it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

He then proceeds to show, in

- Chapter i. That the Gentiles* are under sin.
 ii. That the Jews are under sin.
 iii. That both must be "justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."
 iv. That Abraham under the patriarchal, and David under the Levitical dispensation, were so justified.
 v. The privileges of the believer in this salvation.
 vi. The believer's character.
 vii. The believer's conflict.
 viii. The believer's triumph.

These eight chapters form the doctrinal part of the Epistle.

- Chapter ix. The righteous rejection of the Jews.
 x. The merciful vocation or call of the Gentiles.
 xi. The restoration of the Jews, and "life from the dead to the world."

These three chapters form the prophetical part.

Chapter xii. The foregoing truths contain powerful motives to obedience.

- xii. xiii. Precepts, by which the believer, as a citizen and a Christian, is to glorify God, and benefit his fellow man.
 xiv. Tenderness towards the consciences of others, who may differ as to ceremonial observances.
 xv. That believing Jews and believing Gentiles, though still differing in certain ceremonies, should receive one another affectionately as Christ had received them, and both were graciously addressed by the Holy Scriptures, and might derive joy and peace and hope from those Scriptures.
 xvi. The salutations and commendations of the apostle to various Christian men and women, who, in the faith of Christ, were serving him. And closing with an ascription of praise to God, who designed the gospel for all nations.

These chapters form the practical part.

* All are called Gentiles who were not Jews.

NOTES.

In the fifth chapter there is a fine contrast drawn between Adam and our Saviour Christ; of our loss in the one, and our gain in the other, verses 12-21.

In the eighth chapter there is a view of future happiness as the best support under present trials, verses 18-25.

In chapter eleven there is a remarkable warning not to boast against the Jews; not to plead the merit of works; not to be highminded, as we can only stand by faith; and not to imagine infallibility, verses 18, 20, 25; and that it is only of the mercy of God, as revealed in the gospel, that either Jew or Gentile can be saved. Christians are also bound to send this gospel to the Jews, verses 30, 31.

This Epistle, understood, and believed from the heart, would be sufficient for the faith, practice, and salvation of man, for which let us pray:—

"O God, who, through the preaching of the blessed apostle St. Paul, hast caused the light of the gospel to shine throughout the world: Grant, we beseech thee, that we, having his wonderful conversion in remembrance, may show forth our thankfulness unto thee for the same, by following the holy doctrine which he taught, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

In this inspired Epistle to the church of Rome there is not a word about St. Peter as pope of Rome; the worship of the virgin Mary or saints; confession of sin to a priest, or his power to absolve; extreme unction; or purgatory.

All these have been the inventions of men since the Epistle was written, and ought not to be believed. It is mixing poison with wholesome food.

"THE BEST CUP."

FROM THE GERMAN.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jer. xvii. 9.

It was on a beautiful summer evening that good pastor Schöner, of Wurtemberg, was sent for by one of his parishioners, who, unconsciously to herself, was drawing near to death. Up to the present time the woman had belonged to the numerous class of the self-righteous. She had not failed in observing the daily worship of God, and was often found at

the communion table, but in so doing she thought she had done all that was necessary to secure salvation. She had, therefore, never willingly listened to the faithful discourses of pastor Schöner (to whose congregation her husband belonged), because, she said, his preaching was only suitable for sinners, not for pious people; and that she knew of many who wept at his words, who, formerly at least, had not much to do with virtue. She believed that most of his hearers were as bad, for she thought that people who allowed themselves, in every sermon, to be called sinners and exhorted to repentance, must have committed some great crimes.

So when pastor Schöner came to this sick woman she addressed him thus: "Above all things, sir, I must beg that you do not consider me a sinner, or speak to me so much about sin and repentance as you are in the habit of doing. I have not sent for you to do that. I have committed no sin during my life, and was piously brought up by God-fearing parents, so that I have never, unless when sick, neglected the public worship of God, and have always been charitable to the poor; therefore, sir, say something that will be comforting to me in my sickness."

"Happy woman!" said the good pastor. "Happy woman, who have never sinned! Hitherto, I have only heard of one who never knew sin, and that one was our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I see that you cannot receive my consolations, for I must confess to you, before God, that I am a great sinner—among all poor sinners the greatest; that I, so long as I can recollect, cannot comfort myself by the remembrance of any perfectly holy action, anything altogether well-pleasing to God, which I have done. But, thanks be to him, his strength is made perfect in weakness!"

The woman, who understood that this answer threw some blame on what she had said of herself, was a little offended, but she turned the conversation to other subjects. She immediately told her little foster-child to bring a cloth, and spread it upon the table, that the pastor might have some coffee. After doing so, the child hastened, unbidden, to bring a cup from the little cupboard, and in so doing let it fall and be broken. At this accident the sick woman became so angry that her whole countenance changed, and her passion burst forth in very unseemly abuse of the child. At last she said, "You do everything so awkwardly, and you are always doing some mischief or other."

But the child would not be so humbled in the presence of

the pastor, and boldly declared it was not so, that she did everything very cleverly, and never did any mischief.

"Hear the little liar!" cried the woman: "you do everything right and nothing wrong! Every one knows, you pert thing, how true that is! If you had not lied so, I might have forgiven you; but go out of my sight, go out of my sight. You will excuse me, sir, for being so angry. It was the best cup. The wicked child knew it, and no one bade her fetch it; but, in her forwardness, she thinks she can do everything."

"Good woman," said the pastor, "is this right or well? and is it not a sin in God's sight that you should be so angry about this cup? I, at least, esteem it a great sin to be so angry, and to utter such language as I have heard."

"Sir," said the woman, "we are weak mortals, and I should certainly not have been so angry if the pert child had not lied, and said she did nothing wrong; nothing makes me so angry as that."

"And you," answered the pastor, "have you not even so lied to the Holy Ghost, when you said you had never sinned? Or, which is the liar? God, who says that the heart of man is evil from his youth upwards, and that none are without sin, before him; or you, who say you have no sin? As that child trusts to her own strength for everything, are not you (even when saying we are weak mortals) as self-confident as she is, considering yourself as already perfect, and so have no need that God the Father should have sent his Son into the world to redeem you? You need no Saviour, no sin-pardoner, and no Holy Ghost to lead and strengthen you! It is said, 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;' and he who confesses his sins, and knows he cannot purify himself by his own strength, daily beseeches the Saviour, through the might of the Holy Spirit, to purify and sanctify him. You would not (for so your words mean), you would not belong to those happy ones singing hallelujahs before the throne of Him who has bought and redeemed them out of all nations, or to the fair company who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For you, who are without sin, no sacrifice has been offered, no blood of reconciliation shed. For you, the angels have never rejoiced. You would enter heaven and be saved, not through God and his Anointed, but through the father of lies and of pride."

The heart of this self-righteous sinner was touched at last; she wept aloud, and stretching out her hand to the pastor,

begged he would help her to pray that God would forgive her and be gracious to her. We need not say how joyfully the good pastor watched over this humbled penitent, as she daily became more grounded in self-knowledge, and at the same time could see, in her faith and humility, forgiveness for all her sin through the blood of Christ. Her life closed amidst much bodily suffering, but in joyful and believing hope of eternal life.

W. P.

THE SWEARER RECLAIMED.

AN officer of rank, who was very much addicted in early life to the sinful habit of swearing, owed his improvement in this point, and in others of higher moment, to a curious reproof which he received from a Scotch minister.

When he was still a lieutenant, being in Newcastle, he once got into a quarrel in the street with some people. The dispute was carried on, on both sides, with a profusion of impious expressions. A minister passing by was shocked at the profaneness, and as he pressed through the crowd with upraised stick, he said to one of the principal disputants, "Oh, John, John, what do I hear? You, a poor collier lad, swearing as though you were a lord in the land! Oh, John, do you not fear what may be the consequence? However oaths may suit this brave gentleman, do you, John, and your equals dare to misuse the name of Him from whom you have life and being?" Then turning to the officer, he continued, "Sir, you will pardon this poor man, for he knows no better."

The young officer drew back full of shame, and unable to give any answer. The next day he went to the minister, and thanked him frankly for his seasonable rebuke. The good man did not lose the opportunity thus afforded him, and sought earnestly to convince the young man of his sinfulness, and to lead him to seek pardon and reconciliation by repentance and faith in the Saviour, and to pray for the Holy Spirit, that from grateful love to Christ he might hate and turn from every evil way.

It may be hoped that the interview, begun with humility and attended with faithful counsel, was blessed to the young man's eternal welfare. At all events from that day he never swore again.

TRACT ANECDOTE.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

IN a sea-port town on the coast of France, where the lower orders of the inhabitants are immersed in the darkness and ignorance of Popery, a tract called "Le Bon Berger," or "The Good Shepherd," was some time ago lent to a poor woman. It was one which directed lost sinners to the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the tenth chapter of John's Gospel. The woman lent it to a relative, an old fisherman, who was now past labour. Having read it with great interest, this man declared that he would give it a new name, and that it must be henceforth called "The wandering sheep." He lent it to all his friends, and read it to his wife and daughter, saying, "If this is the new religion, you will find it better than the old one."

It appeared that what this old fisherman and others so particularly admired in this tract was, that it directed them to go at once to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, and not in a round-about way to seek the intercession of the virgin Mary or saints. The same tract was read to twenty of these poor people on one occasion by a little boy, who had a loud voice, and read distinctly, and it was then returned to the old woman who had been the original circulator of it.

But it did not remain long with her, for one borrowed it, then another, and it was read by the crews of five of the fishing-boats. It grew dirtier and dirtier, but still continued to go from house to house, always welcomed, and always awakening a desire to possess the word of God.

On one occasion a woman, who had been hitherto as self-righteous as a Pharisee, and had even boasted that God had never sent her an hour's illness because she had done so many good works, on returning the tract said, with tears in her eyes, "I am this wandering sheep."

This tract was a simple allegory, depicting the love of Christ to a lost sheep, in living to seek it, and dying to save it, which furnishes a new proof of the power of allegory over the human mind. A hundred copies of it were afterwards circulated among this interesting people.

A HOME AND A HEARTY WELCOME.

THERE is a green blade growing,
And a lovely daisy blowing,
And a kingcup there, and a primrose fair,
And all by the green grass growing;
And there I shall meet,
For my weary feet,
A home and a hearty welcome.

And there is a noble bed,
Where many a prince has been lying;
And a rest for the head, and a white sheet spread,
And a door to none denying.
And strait though it be,
There is room for me,
For a home and a hearty welcome.

And I have been called to go,
When all the rest denied me;
Though dark I know is that chamber low,
And cold will the friends be beside me:
But cold though they be,
They are ready for me,
And a home and a hearty welcome.

But there will be a window bright,
When the cock-crow gives his warning;
And the long, dark night will break at the light,
And joy will come in the morning;
And I shall arise,
Through the radiant skies,
To a home and a hearty welcome.

But hark! 'tis the clarion sound,
Which calls us from our slumber;
And the hearts around, from the dull cold ground,
Spring up in countless number;
And He bids us all
To his golden hall,
To a home and a hearty welcome.

For us He shed his blood,
To rescue us when strangers;
And his word made good, when by us he stood,
Through all our toils and dangers:
And now we rest
At his royal feast,
At our home, with a hearty welcome.

No more away we'll go,
No more from him we'll sever;
From our wandering woe in the vale below,
With him we rest for ever:
In his world of light,
And his kingdom bright,
We've a home and a hearty welcome.

REV. J. BULL.



COME UP HITHER.

WORLDLY people who have worldly means not unfrequently live above them. Christian people have spiritual means, and they often live below them. They sit still in holy things when they should bestir themselves; creep when they should run, and run when they should fly. This is to their reproach. What is the use of means if they are not used? Wings are given to birds that they should fly; and means of grace and hopes of glory to Christian people, that their desires may soar heavenward. "They that wait upon the Lord shall mount up with wings as eagles," Isa. xl. 31. God's holy word is full

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of gracious and heavenly invitations: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," Matt. vi. 33. "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth," Col. iii. 2. What is this but beckoning us above? What is this but saying, "Come up hither?"

Christians should remember their royalty; they should never forget that through his grace, who loved them and gave himself for them, they are "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." Ill does it become the children of a king to be loitering with soiled garments in the market-places of the earth, when they should be in their father's court. The sons of the heavenly King should wear the garments of praise: the "King's daughter" should be "all glorious within;" her clothing should be "of wrought gold." Up then, Christian; put on your royal apparel; take up the timbrel and harp, and say, "O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms," Psal. xcv. 1, 2. In such a frame as this, we shall always be ready for the coming of the Lord, and quick to catch the voice, "Come up hither."

Prayer and praise are as necessary to a Christian, as the food he eats, and the breath he draws. Why, then, are we so forgetful of the words, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you?" Luke xi. 9. Why do we not more gratefully remember that, "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High?" Psal. xciii. 1. We rob ourselves by neglecting prayer, and we rob God by omitting praise. Sad is it when a drowsy body and an unwilling spirit are dragged by duty to the throne of grace, as an ox to the slaughter, instead of springing forwards with ardent alacrity. Did we rightly estimate the value of prayer and praise, we should ever be looking heavenwards, and the invitation, "Come up hither," would always be sounding in our ears.

How often do we take of the bread and the cup, in the Lord's supper, without receiving therefrom that spiritual nourishment which this ordinance is intended to bestow! What is the bread, and what is the wine, unless, by the Spirit's teaching, we are thereby led to remember the atoning death of the Lord for the sin of the world? There is a low sense in which the supper of the Lord is received, and there is a high sense. In the former, the heart is cold, and the tongue

silent ; in the latter, our hearts kindle within us, and our language is, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." We feel ourselves humbled, and yet exalted ; weakened, and yet inspired with new strength. Whatever earthly voices may say, heavenly invitations appear to cry aloud, "Come up hither."

When honour, or riches, or power, or any other worldly advantage is to be had for climbing, men are seldom backward, however elevated the height that is to be attained ; but when heaven is the prize, the candidates become few in number. Again, mankind are wonderfully quick of hearing when interest cries out to them, "Come up hither ;" but marvelously deaf when the same cry comes from Christian duty. Tell a man once of a gold mine, and it will be sufficient ; but say to him twenty times over that the law of the Lord is "better than gold and silver," and it will be necessary to tell him again before he believes you. Hundreds compass sea and land ; combat wind and waves ; and endure heat and cold, hunger and thirst, toil and danger, to get what they cannot keep, and to obtain what soon fades away. The flattering world says much, but one sentence from our heavenly Father is worth it all, and that sentence is "Come up hither."

Why, when worldly people are so wise in their generation, should Christians act so foolishly ? Why should they go mourning when they ought to be rejoicing in the hope set before them ? Instead of sitting down to the bread and water of affliction, they ought rather to arise and anoint themselves with the oil of gladness. Is it a truth that their sins are forgiven them ? that their Leader and Lord will guide them by his counsel, and afterwards receive them to glory ? that he is even now gone to prepare a place for them in his kingdom, where they shall reign with him for ever ? What more, then, can be desired ? Surely, instead of sorrowing, their joy should be full. Surely they should say, "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Je-us," Eph. ii. 4—7. What is this on the part of our heavenly Father, but saying to us in the fullest sense, "Come up hither ?"

The soul, howe'er by worldly ills surrounded,
That trusts in God, shall never be confounded.

Time, with the stride of a giant, is hastening on, and soon or late, the consummation of all things will arrive ; but fear not, follower of the Redeemer, for thy feet are on a rock, and

thy hope shall never fail. The apostle John says, "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven; and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither," Rev. iv. 1. Whether, at the last day, this invitation be given with a loud trumpet, or a low whisper, it will not signify. All God's people will be sure to hear it, for, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. xxv. 34), is but another way of saying, "Come up hither."

Christian, take heart. Thy Father's hand is o'er thee,
And light, and love, and joy, and heaven before thee.

G. M.

SETTING THE HEART UPON IT.

"COME, come, Master Watson, do not go about it in that idle, careless manner. Set your heart upon it, and that's the way to do it well."

Thus spoke a respectable tradesman to his young nephew and apprentice, whom he was endeavouring to instruct in some duty, in which the youth was displaying neither energy nor aptness. An expression of contempt even crossed his countenance as he muttered to himself, "I expect my heart was made for something better than pounds, or hogsheds either, of raw sugar."

"You must not misunderstand your worthy master, my young friend," said an elderly gentleman, who was standing near the counter, and observed what was passing; "he does not desire you to set your heart upon the sugar, but upon doing your duty, and doing it with an earnest good-will. 'Diligent in business,' you know, as the great Master has exhorted us all; that is what he means."

"Ay, ay, that's what I mean, sir. If he would work in work hours as he plays in play hours, I should be satisfied. You can soon see when a man's heart is in what he is doing."

"That is, his good will and determination, neighbour; for even a man's business is not the right place for his heart, by which we usually understand his affections."

"Well, sir, I don't know, but it's the right way to get on. Men who love their business generally prosper in it."

"Ay, but is it not the prosperity on which the heart is set? Now for yourself, my good sir, do you love your business for its own sake, or have you not some ulterior object in the case?"

"Well, I suppose I should like to get rich by it," said the tradesman, smiling good-humouredly; "and no offence in that I hope, sir."

"None at all, neighbour. Only bearing this in your mind all the time, that supposing a human heart, beating with the emotions of a spirit that cannot die, to be set on attaining riches, and resting there, it falls lamentably short of the object for which it was made. Good morning to you, neighbour; and you, my young friend, remember, 'Be diligent in business.' 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might;' do it earnestly, so you will do it well; but keep your heart for Him who has the best right to it."

"A well-meaning man in the main," said the grocer, after his customer had withdrawn. "I always let him say what he pleases, because I know it is not all talk and no practice with him. He pays his way, and helps many a poor, deserving body to do the same, and yet he is not thought to be rich. Yes, yes, one can bear with a bit of advice now and then, when one knows a man lives in the fear of God for himself. That was very good advice he gave you, Watson; you will do well to remember it. Stop; stop; that paper will burst: have more patience. I've set my heart upon making a man of business of you; so mind what you are about, sir."

A few hours afterwards this same youth, well dressed, and with a countenance from which all discontent was banished, ran up against a gentleman in the street.

"Ho! Master Watson, you are in earnest now it seems, without any doubt."

"I beg your pardon, I'm sure, sir," said Watson, retreating a pace. "I suppose I was in a hurry. I did not know I was going so fast."

"Why, you were going like a steam-engine, clearing all before you. Is it business now, Master Watson?"

"No, sir, business is over now, and I am going to amuse myself."

"And this is the way you set about it. Well, there's a time to work and a time to play, or, rather, to rest from work; and the blessing of God should be sought upon both, or neither will do you good."

"A word spoken in due season, how good is it!" Watson walked on at a more sober pace, musing by the way. He had no idea of asking any one's leave to enjoy himself, but gladly seized upon every opportunity which came within his reach. However, the words of this pleasant-looking, cheerful old

gentleman came to the assistance of conscience at a moment when that annoying monitor was half suffocated beneath inclination, self-will, and rebellion against advice and authority. Watson was on his way to join some wild and reckless companions in defiance of his wise uncle's commands: he thought he was quite able to take care of his own character, and ought to be at liberty to choose his own associates, and that it was particularly manly and independent to set up his own judgment of some sixteen or seventeen years against the wisdom and prudence of fifty years' experience of the world and its ways. Had Watson been merely seeking to pass away an hour or two in some idle, but not forbidden, amusement, he might have thought little about the old gentleman's recommendation; but sounding as it did in direct opposition to his purpose of wilful disobedience, he shrank from the reviving remonstrant within.

"I don't see why I should be kept in leading-strings," argued self, "when I've set my heart upon going too. Yes, I will go, and I'll take the consequences;" and the walk which had slackened to a thoughtful loiter became again as brisk as before.

The next morning three youths, in most uncomfortable plight, stood before the presiding magistrate. They had been taken up by the police for disorderly conduct; and having passed the night in custody, were now glad to escape with a reprimand, and an assurance that a repetition of their offence would not be so leniently dealt with. As Watson, crestfallen and in despair at the reception which might await him at home, passed from the police-court, a hand was laid upon his shoulder.

"Young man," said the friendly voice of his former adviser, "be warned in time. You have set your heart upon your own way, and it has brought you already to shame. Try another experiment, and I will answer for the result. 'If sinners entice thee, consent thou not,' but rather incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart. 'In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths'—not to shame and degradation, but in ways of pleasantness and paths of peace. You want now forgiveness for the past; it is in Christ Jesus for all who need it. You want also grace and strength to help in future need; it is in Christ Jesus for all who seek it. You want a friend and companion to confide in and to love; choose Him who can be a guide and counsellor

too, and who loves at all times. And now you want some one to meet for you your uncle's just displeasure; and as you have not objected to my lecture, I will accompany you home, and try my influence in your behalf."

But poor Watson's cause had already been pleaded by a successful intercessor, and he was received with a gentleness and quietness of sorrowful displeasure, which struck deeper into his conscience than any violent resentment could have done. His kind and thoughtful cousin, Fanny, who was in fact, but in her own noiseless, unostentatious way, the presiding genius of the household, had secured from her indulgent father a promise to retain the truant in his position, on observing signs of penitence, and a desire to avoid the repetition of his offence.

But Watson was not the only member of his family subject to that unhappy disease of setting the heart upon things altogether unworthy of it; while duties were idly and carelessly performed, as if beneath the notice of intellectual creatures. His sister Maria, also dependent upon the kindness of their benevolent uncle, was under instruction during the day in the art of millinery and dress-making at a neighbouring establishment.

"Miss Watson," said the superintendent repeatedly, "you are not taking pains with your work. You never seem to set your heart upon what you are doing, and I'm sure I don't know how you are likely to succeed. Pray give more of your mind to your business."

Maria gave the toss to her cotton which she felt every inclination to give to her head, and thought it would be very much beneath any clever girl to set her heart upon stitching a gown. Surely she could use her fingers without any effort of mind or interest of heart. That night, however, her practice, if not her opinion, was changed; and the mind and heart too, which cared nothing for other people's finery, were both fully intent upon planning and executing their own. Fanny, sleepy and tired, was wishing that her cousin would extinguish the light and go to rest; but Maria had no such intention.

"Do be quiet, Fanny, and go to sleep," said she. "I shall be a long time yet, for I have set my heart upon finishing this mantle for Sunday. It will take another night yet, though I work so quickly."

"I am afraid it will make you ill to sit up working so late," remonstrated Fanny.

"Nonsense. When I am really in earnest about anything I never feel tired." It was such a pleasure to be engaged for herself.

The next evening, when Maria hurried to her work, she found it had made considerable progress during the day, and immediately guessed that her generous cousin had bestowed some of her valuable time upon it. Now Fanny's occupations were very numerous. Her father protested that he never enjoyed any food so much as that which Fanny had cooked. No one assisted him in the shop so thoroughly, for it was always evident, he said, that her heart was in all she did. Her mother thought no one kept accounts, or mended the house-linen, or managed the children like Fanny, for she always practised the maxim, that whatever was worth doing at all, was worth doing well; and it was difficult to decide whether she excelled most in parlour or kitchen, at the ledger or the work-basket. As for the children, they were perfectly happy when Fanny could spare a few minutes for play, for she knew how to be a child so well, and played with them as if it were not so much a condescension to their insignificance, as the very delight of her heart to share their pleasure.

But whenever it was remarked that Fanny's heart was in any of the things in which her excellence was felt and acknowledged, a greater mistake was never made. Had her heart, her sympathies, her preferences been in any of them, she never could have accomplished them all, for the human heart must have one paramount aim, one energetic spring of action, one pervading motive; and on the nature of these depends the due performance or the careless neglect of actual duty, as well as of those nameless kindly trifles which contribute to the comfort and pleasure of those whom it is our duty to try to please. Wrong motives may secure the performance of some, even of many, duties; but there is only one which is potent enough, self-denying enough, expansive enough, to stimulate to patient continuance in earnest endeavours to perform them all alike, and Fanny was under its influence.

Maria sat down determinately to work. It was Saturday night, and, as she said, her heart—yes, it was no figure of speech—her heart was set upon wearing a new dress and mantle on Sunday. Fanny, too, seemed in no hurry to retire, for, seated opposite to her cousin, and sharing the light of her candle, she was busily engaged in marking down passages for the instruction of her class in the Sunday-school.

"You have got that to do now, because you have been

assisting me, Fanny," said Maria. "I am sure you must be very tired to-day."

"Not very," said Fanny, cheerfully. "Don't you remember saying, that when really in earnest about anything you never feel tired? And I have good cause to be in earnest about this."

"That is, teaching troublesome children. I often wonder at your Sunday taste, Fanny."

"It is something more than taste, Maria, which interests one for those children's immortal souls."

"Well, I'm sure, to see how you work all the week for bodies, no one would think you had time to care much about souls. You seem to have the art of being interested in everything; even in making those preserves for aunt the other day you seemed to do them as if it was the most delightful employment in the world, and yet you never touch them yourself."

"It was delightful to do them for my mother, and to save her the trouble. I don't remember any other attraction in the case. Don't you remember the exhortation, 'Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him?' and also, 'Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God?' I love those 'whatsoevers;' they help me through many things."

"Well, I think that with tastes and feelings so much above your household slavery, it is a great pity you can't be doing what you think to be serving God all the week as well as on Sunday."

Fanny looked earnestly in her cousin's face to see whether she spoke ironically or seriously; but the busy fingers plied the needle, and there was no expression of irony or sarcasm on the countenance.

"Dear Maria," said Fanny, "do you not understand that the best way to serve God is by doing as well as possible every duty, however humble, in the station in which he has placed us?"

"Well, I dare say you are right; but I know I always require some strong motive to make me do things I don't like, and you seem to like whatever you have to do, though it is impossible really to like some of them."

"I have a strong motive prompting me all. Don't think me self-righteous; but 'the love of Christ constraineth' those who feel that they are redeemed by his blood, and renewed by his Spirit."

Maria, vain and frivolous as she was, knew her cousin too well to accuse her of any hypocrisy. She knew that Fanny's piety was no sudden impulse of passing zeal, no sentimental rhapsody over ideal religion; it was 'patient continuance in well doing;' it was sympathy and love, silently, yet eloquently, testifying by its fruit her union with the living Vine. Everywhere and always Fanny was a Christian; and the highest happiness of her active life was in that secret communion with God in Christ, whence she drew the consecrating motive which ruled her daily conduct; and, the consciousness that "she had done what she could" was lost in gratitude for the grace that had made her what she was.

Twelve o'clock was at hand. A few minutes more, and the mantle was wearable; that is, all visible stitches were just what stitches should be; as for the invisible ones, it was no matter to anybody whether they were long or short, and Maria fell asleep to dream that she looked extremely well at church on the morrow.

Morning came, one of those deceitfully bright mornings which tempt unwary people who dislike trouble to leave home without umbrellas. Having reached the church in safety, and displayed herself to every advantage, the time arrived for getting home again; but Maria's first peep from the porch was singularly disconcerting. A small detachment of umbrellas, covering a few wise heads, not easily cheated by sunshine, were hastily opened. Fanny, who knew all the self-denials and late work connected with the new dress, felt sorry for her cousin, and hastily suggested a method of preserving at least the outside of the mantle from the effects of the rain. But Maria shrank in dismay from the proposal; it was frightful to think of exhibiting the raw edges of the unfinished work, especially as some of her young friends were close behind.

"It is only a summer shower," said her uncle, stepping out to brave it, while the merry twinkle in his eyes insinuated a guess at the consequences to the fanciful creations of human raiment, however refreshing and acceptable to the lilies of the field, which neither toil nor spin.

"I will run home, and send you a cloak and umbrella," said Fanny, darting off on her kind errand. for her own dress was able to survive a shower, and was such as to excite no notice from others, and no anxiety in herself. Besides which, it was her rule never to wear new attire for the first time on Sunday, lest the change, however simple, should interrupt her

attention to the sacred presence promised where two or three meet together in their Saviour's name.

But before any one could be sent, poor Maria appeared, drenched and bespattered, having been ashamed to remain alone in the porch so long. Fanny was ready to commiserate the ruined condition of the unfortunate finery, and to soothe her cousin's vexation. But Maria was considerably humbled, and, contemplating the melancholy aspect of the subject of so much thought and labour, sighed as she remarked, "It was not worth my trouble after all. I wish I could find pleasure in things that will not spoil, and that repay one's efforts, as you do, Fanny."

"Then follow up the wish with a trial, dear Maria, and I dare promise you will not be disappointed."

That afternoon, the same old gentleman, whose remarks were tolerated by Fanny's father, because of his known consistency of character, looked in upon the family. He shook hands with the parents, and accepted the offered seat.

"Your daughter is not returned yet from the school, I conclude," said he, "and I just desired to offer you some compensation for her absence on her labour of love." And he proceeded to narrate to the interested parents the result of Fanny's earnest and affectionate instructions upon two girls whom she had induced to attend the Sunday-school; and how the blessing of God had descended upon her prayerful efforts; and how the reclaimed, reformed, and happy children had carried into their homes and families the influence of the change they had themselves experienced. The tears stood in the parents' eyes as they listened to this tribute to their daughter's self-denying efforts.

"Sir, you would scarcely believe all she does at home too; and the humblest thing seems of as much consequence as the greatest, if only she sees it is right to do it," said her father.

"That is because her heart is in the right place, my friend," said the visitor. "She has been attracted to set her affections on things above, not on things on the earth; and has obtained thence the high and holy motive which secures the due performance of her earthly duties. The heart that has surrendered itself to the winning influence of a Saviour's love, and the guiding grace of the Holy Spirit, is the only heart that cannot be exhausted in its schemes of usefulness, or wearied in its manifestations of Christian love."

B. T.

OLD ANDREW, THE FISHERMAN.

It was a sabbath day, and old Andrew the fisherman had just returned from the place of worship which he usually attended. His dwelling was on a wild sea-coast, and stood on a tall cliff which bounded the ocean. He seated himself on a bank near his door to enjoy the fresh breeze. Not a cloud darkened the blue sky above, nor was there a ripple on the surface of the wide sea, which was spread out like a looking-glass beneath. His fishing-boat was drawn up on the beach, and everything seemed to indicate a season of rest. After Andrew had contemplated the tranquil scene for some time in silence, he said, "Well, the text Mr. L. preached from to day was very fine; one would think it was made for what happened to our little crew last week. I have it marked here," and taking his Bible and spectacles out of his pocket, he read from Psalm cxxii. 25-31, "He commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still." "Calm enough it is now," continued the fisherman. "One would not easily believe how, so short a time ago, the winds were blowing, and the great waves breaking upon this high cliff, and tossing that boat about till, as the Psalm says, we were mounted up to the heavens, and down again into the depths. Mr. L. told us we ought to remember that the Psalm says too, 'Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!' I hope I shall do so after such an escape, and I'll try and remember every word of the sermon, though there were some things in it that I am not quite clear about."

Andrew then sat revolving these some things in his mind. He possessed acuteness of intellect, and had acquired, perhaps from the loneliness of his vocation, a habit of reflection. His meditations were interrupted by the sound of a footstep, and looking up he saw Mr. L., the minister, walking towards him. The pleasant countenance and kind greeting of this gentleman were always welcome to the poor members of his flock. Andrew immediately rose, but Mr. L. said, "Sit down again, Andrew; I will take a seat on the bank near you, and pay my

visit here. The sea-view is beautiful, and nothing can be more refreshing than the smell of the oar-weed. Well, my old friend, I am greatly rejoiced at your safety after such danger, and also to see the good boat Katharine there, after fearing that she was dashed to pieces ; so now tell me what you were thinking of when I came."

"Of your sermon, sir."

"I am glad to hear that, though probably you were criticising me as you sometimes do. However, let me have your thoughts freely, whether favourable or not."

"Well, sir, I liked what you said about the storm last week, and the danger we were in ; and how nothing but the hand of God saved us, and how thankful we ought to be. Then, sir, you spoke about the salvation of our souls from what are worse dangers, and sure so they are ; but you said we could not deliver ourselves, and that the work must be God's from beginning to end."

"I said, Andrew ? No, it was God himself said it : I only repeated to you from his word that we are saved, 'not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy,' Titus iii. 5 ; and that it is, from first to last, only 'By grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God : not of works, lest any man should boast,' Eph. ii. 8, 9. What have you to say against God's word."

But Andrew, like many others who maintain their own prejudices against the plain declarations of Scripture, evaded this question, and replied, "I can't believe it ; I never will, that we can do nothing to help our own souls to be saved ; I lived an honest, decent life always, though I know I was too careless in some things, and they came to my mind when I thought we should go down in the storm. But I made a vow that if we were saved I would attend to them for the future, and say my prayers regularly morning and evening, and never mend my net on the sabbath, but go to worship without failing, and read the Bible too whenever I had time. And now, sir, would you tell me that all this could do me no good ?"

"Do not mind what I would tell you, Andrew ; but before you think of purchasing pardon and the joys of heaven by your own imperfect obedience, listen to what Christ himself tells you. 'When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants : we have done that which was our duty to do,' Luke xvii. 10.

"God does not expect us to be perfect," replied the

fisherman, "and, as you often tell us, sir, he sent his Son to die for us, and make up what is wanting in us."

"The word of God tells you, my friend, that he sent the Son of his love, not to make up for our deficiencies in the work of saving our souls, but to do it himself from first to last by dying for our sins, and fulfilling all righteousness in our stead. And it is written that 'by him all that believe are justified from all things,' Acts xiii. 39. This his Holy Spirit enables us to do, sanctifying our corrupt natures, and making us fit to enjoy what he has prepared for those who love him; so you see, Andrew, that, as I have said, the whole work is his, and his alone, from first to last."

But this is a doctrine so distasteful to the pride of the natural mind, that it is secretly rejected by numbers, who will indulge a vain and sinful desire to add something of their own to the finished work of Christ, though they do not avow it as plainly as the rough old boatman did. "Well, sir," said he, with some asperity, "if the whole thing is done for us, no matter what we do. Of course we may be as wicked as we please. Would you say that was in the Bible?"

"Certainly not. I would say with St. Paul, 'Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? "God forbid," Rom. vi. 1, 2.

But Andrew's self-righteousness had been too much hurt not to influence his temper, and Mr. L. seeing that he was angry thought it injudicious just then to press the subject; so, after some minutes pause, he said, "Your escape from the storm was wonderful, Andrew; your partner, Jack Colman, told me that you are the best boatman on the coast, or the Katharine and her crew must have gone down."

"Don't mind him, sir," replied the fisherman, "I don't like to hear him talk that way after such danger. To be sure I do know how to manage the Katharine pretty well, but the best sailor that ever hoisted sail could not have saved us in that storm. It was God, and he alone that did it."

"I heard that the boat was close to that rock yonder, on which she must have gone to pieces, when you managed to—"

"Oh, sir," said Andrew, interrupting him, "I may have used the means, as I hear you call it sometimes, but to God be all the praise of our escape. If it had not been for a sudden turn in the wind, and that all at once it went down a little, what I did would have been of no use. And you know, Mr. L., what is in the Psalm, 'He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.'"

Mr. L. was forcibly reminded of a remark by Dr. Chalmers, "We are ready enough to concede to the Supreme Being the administration of the material world, and to put into his hand all the force of its mighty elements." But oh, how unwilling, thought he, to acknowledge the commanding influence of Deity in the higher world of moral and intelligent beings; always trying to erect the will of the creature into an independent principle. Again addressing the fisherman he said, "You are quite right, my friend, give all the praise to God. But tell me, did you know all along that it was he only who could save you."

"To be sure I did, sir."

"Why then did you take any trouble? I heard that your exertions were extraordinary; but if you knew that God only could save you, why did you not sit at your ease, or divert yourself in some way?"

"That's a queer question, sir. You might as well ask why I eat and drink, since God could, if he liked, keep me alive without food."

"Indeed I might, Andrew. Your own good sense, and all experience teaches you that it is God's will to bring about his purposes by means. Now, my friend, will you not apply this to what we were just speaking about—the salvation of the never-dying soul? 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate.' Strive, as you did in the storm to save the boat. Use diligently the means which God has mercifully provided, particularly the study of his word, and never rest till you have Christ, and him alone, for your salvation; always remembering that whatever pains you take, 'it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure,' Phil. ii. 13. Come to Jesus as your only Saviour, and in the wildest storm you will find him an anchor, sure and steadfast, for your soul."

Andrew sat for a while rubbing his hand to his forehead as if deep in thought. "Well, sir," said he, "you have put the matter in a new way, quite a new way, to me. But, Mr. L.," he continued with much feeling, "will God save me? I know he is able, but will he?"

"I can reply to that question in the words of the Saviour himself," answered the minister. "'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out,' John vi. 37. Can you doubt his readiness to save you, my friend, who so loved us that he sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him?" 1 John iv. 9.

"It was great love, sir; and you think he is willing to save

me entirely himself, just as he did in the storm? Well, Mr. L., I believe, after all, it is the only way it can be done, for I have often tried to be good, and to keep resolutions, but though I might be a quiet decent man, still, sir, there is something in me that won't let me do right."

"Won't let you be your own saviour; I am sure of it. May you then, with a thankful heart, give the whole glory to Him who is 'the author and finisher of our faith.'"

"I hope I shall, sir, I hope I shall. I think I see these things in a way that I never did before; God must love us greatly."

"And should we not love him?"

"To be sure, sir."

"And prove our love to him?"

"Yes, sir; but how?"

"The Lord Jesus himself tells us, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments,' John xiv. 15. And now, my friend, I think you will no longer ask 'if the whole work of salvation is done for us, no matter what we do, may we not be as wicked as we please?' Shall not our hearts so love him who first loved us, that it will be our delight to do his will, and anxiously try to obey him?"

The old man did not answer, and Mr. L. saw a tear on his rough cheek. Taking his hand kindly, he said, "Think over these things, and you will say—

From the first breath of life divine,
Down to the last expiring hour,
The work of love must all be thine,
Begun and ended by thy power.

E. F. G.

LITTLE FAULTS.

THERE are some persons of so unhappy a disposition that everything annoys them; the countenance is always set in frowns, and bitter cutting words make up the chief part of their conversation. These persons are not only miserable themselves, but they make everybody whose lot is cast with them wretched also.

Ann Williams was one of these characters, and a weary life she led her husband and her poor children. From morning to night they heard the same fretful, cross, fault-finding tone, the same harsh and often wicked words, and saw the same frown on her brow.

One summer's evening she had just finished preparing the

supper. True, the white cloth on the table was spotless, the hearth was perfectly clean, and the food was nicely dressed, for Ann prided herself on being a notable and saving house-keeper; but there was no smile to promise that the meal would be a pleasant one. The children were as usual in disgrace. Little Tom, whose face was the very picture of repressed fun, was placed on his chair in the corner, looking at present very downcast; Mary, the eldest girl, was sewing with the vain hope of finishing her task before her father's arrival; and Sarah was receiving a severe scolding from her mother about a soiled apron, when John Williams returned home from work. He glanced round the room as he entered, and seeing the usual tokens of strife he did not take his little boy on his knee as he wished, but throwing himself on a chair he quietly asked if supper was ready. "Isn't Mary to have any?" asked he, as he still saw her going on with a seam that appeared to him endless.

"She must finish her work first," said Ann, sharply; "make haste, miss, I tell you," continued she, turning to the girl, "and don't be idling there all day."

"And what has poor Tom done?" asked his father; "is he not to have any supper either?"

"He has been a bad boy, but you'll never believe that," exclaimed Ann; "you think neither he nor any of them ever can do any wrong; but if you were here with them all day long as I am, you would soon see some of their tricks; my heart's just broken with them, slaving and working all day long and no thanks; there never were such plagues in the world as those children are, I verily believe."

John Williams only sighed, he had heard this so often; and as for calling his little son over to the table, he knew better than to venture; he was well aware from experience it would only increase the storm, and draw down some of it on his own head also, so he hurried over his supper in silence, and went out as soon as it was done.

Ann had hardly finished giving Mary and Tom their meal alone, and clearing away the supper things, when her neighbour, Mrs. Edgar, entered. There could not be a greater contrast than there was in the appearance of the two women. Ann looked pale and thin, her face furrowed with deep lines, and her brow as usual gloomy; but her visitor's countenance beamed with health and good temper, reflecting the genuine warmth of her true and loving heart. Mrs. Edgar had always a kind and cheerful word for every body, and in her very

limited sphere she tried to do as much good as lay in her power. Everybody in the village who had known sickness or sorrow had felt how pleasant it was to have her near them; she made the pillow for the aching head smoother than any body else could; the doctor's draught was less disagreeable when she gave it, with her pleasant smile, and encouraging word; and when sorrow visited any family, Mrs. Edgar was sure to be beside the mourners, weeping with them, or pointing them in her homely but earnest way to God, who sends afflictions on his children, not always in anger, but oftentimes only to draw them nearer to himself.

Mrs. Edgar was well acquainted with Ann's character. She gave Ann all due respect as a saving and industrious wife, who could make a shilling go much further than most other people, and she thought it a very great pity that her ill temper should have become such a bane to the happiness of her family, and almost a by-word among the neighbours.

John Williams often found his way to Mr. and Mrs. Edgar's house, and many and confidential were the conversations they had about poor Ann's contrary ways. These conversations, mixed with good advice to him, had been of service so far, that he had ceased to answer his wife harshly again; and the passionate oaths he had uttered in former times, were never heard from him now. "I will just run over to your house this very evening," said Mrs. Edgar, hurrying on her bonnet and shawl; "who knows but, by the blessing of God, a word or two from me may do some little good;" and accordingly she arrived as Ann had finished putting the supper things aside.

"I hope you are quite well, Mrs. Williams; and the children, dear little things, how are they? well and happy I hope; how they do grow!" said she, shaking hands all round; "it seems only the other day the eldest was a baby in arms."

Ann, who could not be sullen beside Mrs. Edgar, felt the wrinkles in her face gradually relax, and she smiled as she bade her welcome. "John will be sorry he is not at home," said she, after the first greetings were over, "but he goes out nearly every evening now; where, I don't know,—to the ale-house and the club-room, I suppose,—for he never tells me."

"What makes you think that, Mrs. Williams? John always seems to me most steady; he does not waste his money, I hope."

"Oh no, I can't say that of him, he brings his wages home every Saturday, such as they are; little enough I assure you. Be quiet, children," shouted she, suddenly turning round to

them, "how you do get on, talking and moving! Sit still, I tell you; don't you know my head has been bad all day, and you will tease and annoy me: they lead me a sad life, Mrs. Edgar."

"Poor little dears," said she, looking at them as they sat in a row, all looking very hot and depressed. "Come now, Mrs. Williams, let them out to take a run on that nice grass plot at the back here, it will do them a deal of good to get the fresh air; and they can see the sun going down, and leaving all the golden clouds behind it. Would'nt you like it, my dears?"

"Yes," exclaimed the little chorus of voices.

"They do make themselves so dirty," said Ann, in a fretful tone; but Mrs. Edgar, after a few more pleadings, prevailed, and the business of dressing them began. Sarah was quite beyond herself with delight at this unusual treat in the evening, and soon drew on herself a hard slap from her mother; she began to cry, and little Tom, who always set up a lament for company, began to shout also. Mrs. Edgar stood looking on, quite vexed that what she intended as a pleasure for the children should have brought a punishment on them, and she began to think that perhaps the good counsel she had come over purposely to give, would produce a like effect. The children went out, looking, as usual, sorrowful and spiritless, and Mrs. Edgar sat down, thinking within herself that the speaking to Ann was an evident duty, and that she would go through with it. "Now we are quite alone," she began, "I will speak on a subject I have long had it on my mind to talk to you about; and before I begin," said she, smiling, "I must ask you if you will listen to me; it is about a fault."

"A fault," said Ann, reddening; "I am wasteful and extravagant, I suppose."

"No," replied Mrs. Edgar; "John is quite right when he says, there never was a better manager than you are. Your house is always neat, your children decently dressed, and yourself looking respectable. Why, half the work-people who have the same wages John gets, have their families almost in rags. No, Mrs. Williams, you have not guessed right about the fault I mean." Mrs. Edgar, who felt more timid than usual in bringing her subject of reproof forward, felt it some relief to be able to give a little just praise before she began.

"Does John really say that?" said Ann, looking pleased.

"He does, indeed, over and over again; and with truth, too," replied Mrs. Edgar: "and he laments more than you can

fancy that you let yourself be so easily put out, and make such a fret of things you cannot help."

"Oh that is the fault, then," said Ann; "my temper is it? well, I know I have not a good temper."

Mrs. Edgar was surprised that Ann should so easily confess what she had almost dreaded to speak of; but Ann was one of those persons who make a merit of confessing a fault, at the same time that it never enters their heads, that the knowledge of the fact only makes the fault greater, if no pains are taken to cure it.

"I know I am passionate," continued Ann; "I always was, and it's too late to mend now; we have all our little faults, Mrs. Edgar, and that is mine I suppose."

"But, my dear Mrs. Williams, if you know this yourself, why not try to improve your temper; why rest contented? Believe me, it is of greater consequence than you fancy; the 'little fault,' as you have just called it, destroys the happiness of your family; your husband confesses he has no peace at home; he cannot read or talk in comfort where there is constant scolding and strife; and your little ones have not half the spirit of other children: they require kind words, and encouragement. When I was a little girl, a threat would make me miserable, I could do nothing; but a single word of kindness won my heart even then, and I tried all my poor skill to please those who were kind to me. Little children must have love, or their lives are made miserable before they ought to know sorrow."

"You don't surely mean to say I don't love my children!" exclaimed Ann, her passion rising; "why I spend my whole life working for them, morning, noon, and night, mending, and making, and striving for them."

"I know all this," replied Mrs. Edgar; "few mothers do as much as you do in that way for them, but, poor little things, they cannot understand and feel all this yet. Oh, how far a kind look and word go with them! they require encouragement; they have faults; and part of a mother's duty is to practise forbearance. Often and often a little good advice, given in love, does more good in improving them, and making them leave off their faults, than the severest punishment, or the most angry scolding. Try this plan more, I entreat of you. As a friend deeply interested in your welfare, both in this world, and the world beyond the grave, let me beg of you no longer to call your sin a 'little fault,' but strive to put it away from you."

"Sin!" exclaimed Ann, somewhat awed by Mrs. Edgar's serious manner; "whoever called bad temper a sin before?"

"The book of God tells me that it is indeed a sin," replied Mrs. Edgar, and she took up a Bible which was lying on the side table. This book was very neatly bound, and was carefully dusted every day and placed on the table among other things highly prized by Ann, as an ornament; but, except on various family occasions, such as the birth or christening of a child, it was never opened. Then the event, whatever it might be, was carefully written on a blank page, and the holy book closed again; and there was no other well worn volume in the house, to prove that the Bible was read and studied there. Mrs. Edgar soon found out some passages she sought for, and presently began to read; "The patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools." "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity;—it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and is set on fire of hell." "For where strife is, there is confusion and every evil work: but the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy." "Provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." "But now ye also put off all these, anger, wrath;" and again, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another." "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts."

"These are only a very few of the passages I could find out for you," continued Mrs. Edgar. "Wrath and strife are classed among the lusts of the flesh, side by side with other sins which appear to be of much deeper dye; and it is said of all without distinction, 'They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' Do not deceive yourself any longer, and speak of this 'lust of the flesh' as a 'little fault;' but seek strength from above, and try to overcome it. The sincere prayer, offered in the name of Christ, however feeble, is never uttered in vain; God will give you power to bear with meekness and patience the trials which now vex you so much. You will all be a happy family then, your husband and children will rejoice in their home."

"I have never thought of all this before," said Ann; "I know

I am often hasty and passionate, and use words I ought not, but I did not think it was a sin. I work hard for my children, I try to keep them all decent and respectable, and I thought I was doing my duty to them."

"Not all your duty, Mrs. Williams. There is more than the body to be cared for; it must be clothed and fed, it is true; but there is the soul, the immortal soul, of infinitely more value. The responsibilities and duties of husband and wife are great indeed; fellow travellers through a world of sin and sorrow, they should cheer and encourage each other on the way, 'rejoicing not in iniquity, but rejoicing in the truth;' 'bearing all things—hoping all things—enduring all things,' for 'Christ's sake.' The poor children, too, have great claims on you; they look up to their mother for more than, I fear, you have done for them. Only a mother can soothe and sympathize in their little thoughts and pains; it is indeed a sin to embitter their young lives with continual hard words and frowns. I know, poor little dears, they require all a parent's patience and forbearance; I know their faults must be corrected in time; but remember, 'He (or she) that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly;' 'A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger;' 'Pleasant words are as an honey-comb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.' Try more and more to be like the good wife spoken of in the Bible, in whose tongue is 'the law of kindness.' God made the world very beautiful, and he meant all his creatures to share in and enjoy its beauties; as sunshine makes every scene bright and pleasant, so a good temper casts a brightness even over the every day scenes and affairs of life."

Mrs. Williams did not reply, for she was in tears; not this time of passion or anger, but of sorrow and contrition. For the first time in her life she saw that the "little fault" she was so ready to confess, and excuse, was indeed a most dangerous one; and she trembled to think what misery it had already caused in her family, and might yet make in future. "What can I do?" said she, after a pause; "it is my nature now, I cannot help it."

"You must go to God, who can change the most sinful natures, and pray earnestly through Christ for a more gentle spirit, and more meekness and humility. Watch yourself constantly at the same time, and check the very first feeling of impatience or passion; try not only to make your home a neat and respectable one, but try to make it a happy and a

cheerful one. Forgive me for what I say, Mrs. Williams; but a mother has a great charge laid on her, in her influence over her children; if she is not all that a Christian mother should be, what a fearful example they have before them! It is bad when they are young, for then the first tone is given to their own dispositions and tempers; and worse when they grow up, for then with their untamed and wilful spirits they throw off the yoke of restraint, which they writhed under, and rush to the world for happiness and sympathy. Woe to those parents who drive their children from their homes to find amusement and peace abroad! I am sorry to have made you so unhappy, but if it leads you to God it will be a blessed sorrow. Read his holy word more; there is a remedy for every sin and grief there. Jesus died for the sinner, and there are sweet promises of eternal joy in his love to every one who believes in him. Oh, what a life his was on earth! how kind and considerate to guilty, fallen man! and he is as ready to hear and sympathize now, as he was then. John has been reading the holy Bible with my husband and me lately, and how happy it will be when he can read it aloud in his own house, with his own family, morning and evening. He wishes it; he told me so."

"Yes," said Ann, "he may blame me there as well as for other things. I never could bear reading aloud, either the Bible or any other book; I was always too busy—too much thinking of working and striving: how wicked I have been! If you would only come oftener and tell me what to do, I would try to learn the right way."

Mrs. Edgar promised she would soon see her again; but said she, rising, "I see the sun is nearly down, and it is time for the dear children to be in before the dew begins to fall."

"You have done me a great kindness," said Ann, holding out her hand; "I never thought of these things before; I am, I know, a poor weak creature, but I will try to profit by what you have told me."

"If you seek God's blessing on your endeavours, for his Son's sake," said Mrs. Edgar, "they will not be in vain. John knew I was coming to see you this evening; he is staying with my good man till my return."

"Then he is not at the ale-house, or the club-room?"

"No, you judged him wrongfully there; he has spent many evenings at our house of late, talking and reading with us."

"I have driven him from home," said Mrs. Williams, to herself, after Mrs. Edgar was gone; and, for the first time for many years, she offered up an earnest prayer for pardon and

forgiveness; and the prayer was not the less heard by Him who judges the thoughts and feelings of the heart, that the words were broken and often interrupted by bitter but contrite tears.

MY MOTHER'S DEATH-BED.

I WAS summoned a little while ago to the death-bed of my beloved mother. She was a true Christian. No parent ever commanded more completely than she did the respect and love of her children; for, looking back through all the years in which we had observed her example, we could none of us recal anything which we deemed inconsistent with the profession of the gospel. When I reached the home of my childhood, I found her, though perfectly conscious, able to hold only a few moments' conversation with me; but that conversation confirmed my persuasion that she was fully prepared for the change which was evidently at hand. She soon fell into a stupor, from which she recovered only for a few brief intervals during the night and following day. We thought in the afternoon that the power of speech was gone, and resigned ourselves to the sad persuasion that we should hear her voice no more. In the evening, however, she rallied, and intimated that she wished the whole family to be gathered together.

The scene which followed was most impressive. She took her last farewell of her husband, and of each of her children in turn, as well as of some friends present. But her chief anxieties were on behalf of her unconverted children. She first addressed them collectively, and spoke calmly and seriously of the value of the religion of Christ, and of the solace which it afforded in the hour of suffering and death; intreating them to seek for mercy through the Lord Jesus. She then spoke to them individually. She said but little to those of whom she had reason to hope that they had sought and found salvation; but to those concerning whom she could entertain no such hope, she spoke most pointedly, giving to each the counsel which was most appropriate to his or her peculiar circumstances and character. She had scarcely done this, when she fell back exhausted, and relapsed again into unconsciousness, from which she only rallied for a few very brief intervals, and after the lapse of less than another day she breathed her last. It was well remarked by one present, "That was the most powerful preaching to which her children could ever listen." It strikingly illustrated the deep solicitude of a Christian parent for the conversion of her children. This had

been the object of care and anxiety during life, and she sought it with her latest breath.

This account may meet the eye of one whose parents' anxiety for his salvation has been equally obvious. No truly pious parent will be indifferent to the salvation of his children. That anxiety, and especially the grounds of it, may be regarded as a powerful subordinate reason why they themselves should be most earnest in their inquiries after eternal life.

When a parent has reason to believe that his child is converted, many most distressing apprehensions are allayed. That parent is aware that there is a strength in youthful passion which has often set aside the wisest counsels and overcome the strongest restraints. He cannot conceal from himself the truth that the children of the most exemplary parents have been seduced by the temptations of the world, and beguiled to their ruin. He may see nothing in the present character of his own children, to justify any such apprehensions respecting them, but he feels that he can have no security till he knows that the young man or young woman has "cleansed his or her way by taking heed thereto according to God's word," and till he knows that the child's heart has been brought by the power of Divine grace into sympathy with that word.

When such a change is wrought in the child, there springs up in the heart of the parent a feeling of inexpressible joy, because of the oneness of affection and sentiment which from that hour subsists between them. One of the most touching and beautiful scenes on earth is that of a household gathered for religious instruction, or for the hallowed services of domestic devotion. Yet there is a lovelier scene than even that—a scene on which an angel might gaze with unutterable delight, and that is a converted household—parents, and children, and servants, all inspired by the same glorious hopes, and journeying together, a united and a happy band, to heaven. If there is one parent more than another to be envied, it is not the one whose children are admired for their personal beauty or intelligence, nor who sees them all prospering in life beyond his utmost wishes; but that parent, who looking around on his family, can say, "We are all one in Christ Jesus." Even that mighty principle, a mother's love, becomes a mightier, holier thing, when she can recognise in her children not only the likeness of their earthly parents, but the likeness of Christ.

This is a world of separation. It is not the order of nature, that our earthly friendships and relations should be perpetual. Various events divide by distance those who are most warmly

attached, and sooner or later there must fall the stroke of death. It is most commonly the case that the parent leaves behind him his children in the world. It is often an agonizing reflection that those he thus leaves behind are unsaved. The only thought which mars the peace of his latest hours is the fear that, with regard to some, the farewell which he speaks may be a final one. How different when, as the departing saint looks on the circle which has gathered around his bed, he can say with confidence and hope to all, "Children, we shall meet again."

Or it may be that the child is summoned first. It is no uncommon thing for parents to have to bear their children to the grave. There have been those who, in such a sad bereavement, would have soon dried their tears if they could but have cherished the persuasion that all was well with their lost one; but who have been bowed down by the bitter thought that there was nothing on which hope could dwell. There was something of this, perhaps, in the heartbroken lamentation of David over Absalom: "O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee. O Absalom, my son, my son!" How different was the calm and subdued resignation in which he comforted himself for another child of whose safety he doubted not; saying, as he rose from the ashes and laid aside his sackcloth, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

It is a joyful thought to the parent, and surely not less joyful to the child, that, believing in a common Redeemer, they shall meet again. Often between members of the same household there roll the billows of vast oceans. One may find a burial place in some distant land, and another by the bones of his fathers; but it matters little, if the spirit, renewed and sanctified, ascends to heaven. Those are happy scenes when at some festive time the members of a separated household meet for a brief season, though it be to part again. But how inconceivably delightful the reunion in heaven of the household which has been divided by death, all wearing the white robes of the redeemed, and all safe for ever! Who, as he contemplates such a possibility, does not unite in this prayer—

When soon or late we reach the coast,
O'er life's rough ocean driven,
May we rejoice, no wanderer lost,
One family in heaven!

Reader! has yours been the privilege of a pious parentage? If so, think of the solicitude which has been felt for your salvation; of the tears which have been shed for you; of the prayers

which have been offered on your behalf; and, not least, if it has been your mournful lot to stand by a parent's death-bed, think of the counsels which were addressed to you there. And as you call these things to your remembrance, resolve, "My father's, my mother's God, shall from this hour be my God, and their Redeemer shall from this hour be mine." s. g.

CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE.

THE obedience that accompanies salvation is a constant obedience: "I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end," Psa. cxix. 112. The causes, springs, and motives of holy obedience are lasting and permanent; and, therefore, the obedience of a sound Christian is not like the morning dew or a deceitful bow. The love of Christ, the promises of Christ, the presence, the discoveries, the example of Christ, and the recompense of reward held forth by Christ, make a sound Christian hold on and hold out in the ways of obedience, in the face of all dangers and deaths.

But hypocrites and temporaries are but partial, transient, and inconstant in their obedience: they talk of it, they commend it, and now and then *step* in the way of obedience, but do not *walk* in it; they are only constant in inconstancy. "Will the hypocrite delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?" Job xxvii. 10. Will he call upon God in time of prosperity and in time of adversity? in time of health and of sickness? of strength and of weakness? of honour and of disgrace? of liberty and of durance? The answer is, he will not in every time call upon God. As a lame horse, when heated, will go well enough, but when he cools halts downright, even so a hypocrite, though for a time he may go on fairly in a religious way, yet when he has attained his ends he will halt, and be able to go no further.

The abbot, in Melancthon, lived strictly, walked demurely, and looked humbly so long as he was but a monk; but when, by his seeming sanctity, he was made abbot, he grew proud and insolent; and being asked the reason of it, he confessed that his former carriage and lowly looks were but to see if he could find the keys of the abbey. Ah, many unsound hearts there are that put on the cloak of religion, speak like angels, and look like saints to find the keys of preferment, and having found them none prove more proud, base, and vain than they.

But that obedience which accompanies salvation is constant and durable. A Christian in his course goes straight on

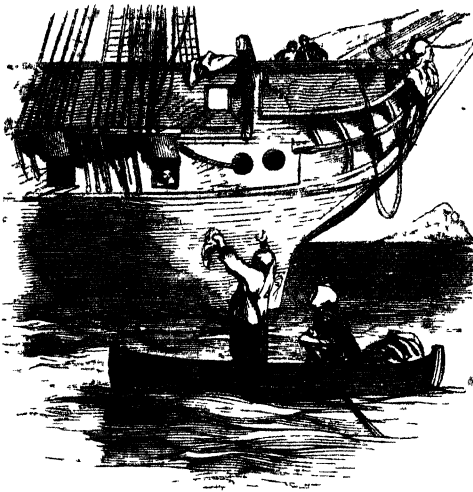
heavenwards. The two milch kine "took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh. and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left," 1 Sam. vi. 12. So gracious souls go straight along the highway to heaven, which is the way of obedience; though they go lowing and weeping, yet they still go on, and turn not aside to the right hand or to the left. If by the violence of temptation or corruption they are thrust out of the way at any time, they quickly return into it again. The honest traveller may step out of his way, but he soon returns into it again, and so does the honest soul.—*Brookes.*

CHRISTIAN LOVE.

CHILDREN of one common Father,
 Brethren of one common Lord.
 Travellers to one glorious heaven,
 Guided by one holy word:
 Why should we thus linked together
 Stand with icy mien apart?
 Hope we not to live for ever
 With one Lord—one home—one heart?
 Have we not a sacred warrant,
 Sealed by Him who dwells above,
 That a hollow tinkling cymbal
 Is a heart unwarmed by love?
 Life is but a transient ripple
 On eternity's great sea;
 Can we spare from such a moment
 Time for strife and jealousy?
 Prisons, swords, and fagots are not
 Bigotry's sole weapons;—no,
 The tongue, the pen—hard words, fierce glances,
 Each can strike a bigot's blow.
 Would you win an erring brother.
 Draw him near with cords of love;
 Whisper gently, "Come, and let us
 The sweet bliss of union prove."
 Scowls and unkind words will harden
 The cold heart you wish to thaw;
 Love—love is the Christian's magnet,
 Love his all-containing* law.
 Let us then inscribe our banner
 With this motto, "LOVE," and go,
 All united—one grand army—
 To fight with SIN our only foe.

J. E. J.

* Matt. xxii. 39; Rom. xiii. 8-10.



THE HAPPY ISLAND.

"How much you have travelled, uncle Edward," said Frank. "You have, in the various countries you have visited, witnessed enjoyments and suffering, which we who stay quietly at home can scarcely form an idea of."

"I have certainly witnessed a great variety," his uncle replied; "still my inference is, that happiness and misery are more equally diffused, and more independent of outward circumstances than is usually supposed."

"It is not easy to believe that, uncle," said Fanny, Frank's sister. "Who could think it possible that those who inhabit the magnificent palace of the Russian emperor, which you have just described to us, are not happier than the ignorant people in a Greenland hut?"

"While I maintain my position," her uncle answered, "you are not for a moment to imagine that I undervalue the blessings of civilization and education; they furnish those who possess them with the means of great and rational enjoyment; but, alas! like every other gift from our heavenly Father, they are so much perverted by our sinful race, that I believe, from experience, the fact to be what I have stated."

"Well, dear uncle," said Fanny, "among all the countries you have visited, and the great variety they have presented to you, will you kindly tell us which, on the whole, you supposed to be the happiest people?"

Uncle Edward smiled, and said, "You forget that I have just told you how the result of my observations is a belief that there is in all this variety of circumstances a tolerably equal distribution of enjoyment among mankind. However, I will acknowledge that one place which I visited is more associated in my mind with the idea of happiness than any other."

"Please tell us about it, sir," said Frank.

"Willingly; but you will be disappointed if you expect to hear of some place renowned for beauty or luxury. Fanny's question recalled a far different scene to my mind. However, you shall hear. I had paid a long visit to Petersburg, whose splendid buildings I was just now describing, and had seen enough of their inhabitants—even those of the czar's palace, dear niece—to discover that they were subjects of many cares and anxieties, such as are unknown in the Greenlander's hut, when I embarked at Cronstadt on my way home. The night we sailed I had been asleep some hours, when I was awakened by a shock and crash. Rushing upon deck I found that we had struck on a rock which had fixed our vessel, and she was beating alternately stem and stern. Providentially, the night was fine and the wind moderate; still the danger was great. It was a solemn scene to all; but oh! how awful to those on board, whose souls had not already fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us in the gospel, 'Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast,' Heb. vi. 19. The boats were prepared in case it should be necessary for us to leave the ship; but the captain recommended us to remain on board, if possible, till daylight; he then did everything likely to preserve the crew, and minute guns were fired.

"When morning broke, we found ourselves in a more perilous state than we had even imagined. The part of the gulf in which we were was full of rocks, and the breakers and swell of the sea were frightful; and as we gazed on the scene of desolation around, there seemed no likelihood of our being saved. In this extremity it pleased God to help us. The minute guns were heard on shore, and just as we had given up all hope, we perceived two little boats approaching. At last they came alongside, rowed by equal numbers of men and women. They told us, in the Finnish dialect, that they came

from a little island, named Stamieux, which was the nearest land. A friend who travelled with me, and myself, went immediately on board one of the little boats, and, through a very rough sea, reached the island. A rosy young woman, who had helped to row us from the ship, conducted us to her mother's cabin, the principal one of the place. It was a spacious room, and really looked quite picturesque from being furnished with all sorts of fishing utensils, and nets hanging in festoons from the roof of the apartment. One casement window opened towards the wild ocean, and another towards a smooth little bay where we soon had the satisfaction of seeing our ship lie safe at anchor.

"In this room our guide's mother, or 'the mamma,' as she was always called, lived, surrounded by a numerous tribe, and was, in a measure, queen of the island. She received us with real hospitality, made the stove blaze with a large fire, to dry us, and from her little store produced milk and butter, which, with black bread and some tea we had brought, formed our supper. She then prepared beds for us, and to my surprise, I found mine of the softest eider down, with pillow-cases neatly trimmed. At night all the family disappeared into different recesses, like cupboards, to sleep. Early in the morning her son Thomas came in with his boat from a neighbouring island; his arrival awoke the whole cottage. The old mamma, and her daughter, and daughters-in-law, and their children, all got up. They all gathered round Thomas to hear his adventures, and give him his breakfast, and then began the labours of the day; the women working at their spinning-wheels, all smiles and good-humour. I never saw more industrious, nor, apparently, more contented beings.

"As the old mamma understood Russ, of which I knew something, I gained as much information from her as I could respecting this interesting little colony. She told me that the population of the island was fifty-two souls, including children; they were now Russian subjects, but had retained their primitive manners and customs just as when they belonged to Sweden. I was struck with a certain dignified simplicity in their mode of thinking, which, as far as one could judge, seemed to govern all their actions. When we opened our trunks to dry our clothes, we did not think it prudent to quit the room at the same time; and indeed our wardrobes, and various articles collected in our travels, excited their curiosity and admiration. I selected some things as presents for the

family, but the mamma answered in the name of all, 'You are good, and we thank you; but these fine things are of no value to us. You are going across the great water where you have friends who will take pleasure in seeing you wear them.' I urged her to accept them, and mentioned the obligations we felt for their hospitality. She smiled, and answered that this was only their duty; she had heard of wicked islanders who treated shipwrecked persons cruelly; but for their parts, they had learned to consider such as unfortunates sent them by their heavenly Father, who commanded them always to do unto others as they would wish to be done by. This led me to guess the source from whence they had derived their contentment, their love one to another, and benevolence towards strangers, which had rather puzzled me.

"It is true that nature has been bountiful to these interesting islanders in the gifts of health, strength, and rustic beauty; and industry supplies them with excellent clothing and food, so that they know not want. Their island, though a barren rock of granite, is so diversified with groups of fir trees, and dimpling rivulets, by grôttoes clothed in seaweeds, and all the variety of an indented shore, that it is a picturesque and beautiful spot. Still, with my belief that happiness depends but little on outward circumstances, these advantages by no means explained the general contentment which I witnessed at Stamieux. There was, in the cottage, a large Finnish Bible of very ancient date; it was constantly read, and listened to with the deepest attention, every eye sparkling with delight at hearing its sacred contents. As well as I could judge, their form of religion was what is called Lutheran; my short stay and imperfect knowledge of the language in which I conversed with the mamma, being my only medium of communication with the others, prevented my forming any accurate idea of how far the hearts of these people were influenced, and their understandings enlightened by the blessed truths of the gospel; but it is written, 'By their fruits ye shall know them,' and I had reason to trust that the peace of mind, and the strict morality I witnessed among them arose from genuine belief.

"After passing six days as their guest, our ship being repaired, and the wind having changed, we prepared to bid adieu to these (comparatively) innocent and happy islanders. They took leave of us with great regret, and their usual kindness, the old mamma saying, while tears filled her eyes, 'May God

bless you, and guide you in safety over the great water ; but pity me, for I shall never know it.'

"Just as our vessel was getting under weigh, a boat hailed us ; it was this good old patriarchal lady, who, having found a pocket-handkerchief belonging to me, immediately ordered out her boat, and, with the assistance of one of her daughters, rowed off to the ship, and was glad, she said, to take another look at us, and to tell us that she should pray for our safety and welfare. She lingered near us as long as it was possible, but the wind freshened, and we soon lost sight of her and of the happy island."

"Thank you, dear uncle," said Fanny, "you have given us a delightful sketch of that place, or rather of the inhabitants, so good, so satisfied, and so careless about the fine things that cause so much strife and envy in the world. I do think I should like to live there."

Frank laughed. "You would look well, sister," he said, "rowing a boat through the rough sea, spinning your own dress, and eating black bread."

"Oh, but they were quite happy," she answered.

"My dear niece," her uncle replied, "that is far more than I asserted. These amiable people were, like the rest of mankind, subject to all the evil feelings that cause strife, envy, and what is wrong in the world. I merely wished to describe them as, on the whole, the most contented and happy people I had ever met with, so far as I had an opportunity of observing ; but do not fail to remember that I had reason to believe that this superiority arose from religious principles and feelings being diffused among them, and from their having the word of God as their teacher and director upon all occasions. How far a longer residence among the isolated inhabitants of Stamieux might have altered this favourable and very pleasant impression, it is impossible to say ; I only professed to give you a sketch of the scene as it then appeared to me ; but this I may say with certainty, my dear nephew and niece, that wherever or however you are situated, there is but one way of securing a tranquil, contented spirit here, and happiness hereafter. Seek—and never rest till you find it—reconciliation with your God through the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners, and that blessed Spirit of adoption whereby we may cry, Abba, Father, Rom. viii. 15 ; and rely with implicit confidence on him with regard both to temporal and eternal concerns, loving him, and, for his sake, all his creatures, because he first loved us, 1 John iv. 19.

This will produce the nearest approach to what Fanny calls being quite happy that may be enjoyed in the present state.

Peace may be the lot of the mind
That seeks it with meekness and love;
But rapture and bliss are confined
To the glorified spirits above.

E. F. G.

THE PIETISTS.

At a time when true religion seemed almost extinct in Germany, and dead form to have usurped its place, PHILIP JACOB SPENER was raised up to arouse his countrymen from their indifference. It is generally by the "foolishness of preaching," that it pleases God "to save them that believe;" and so it was at the end of the seventeenth century. But then, as now, the faithful preacher met with great opposition from the worldly. He was not called to martyrdom nor to open persecution, but taunts, sneers, scoffs, and slanders met him on every side.

"Pietist" was a word invented to deride those who listened to him, who tried to profit by the means he recommended for growth in grace, such as meetings for mutual edification and sacred singing; and attending catechetical lectures; and above all, by carefully avoiding conformity with the corrupt and dissipated fashions of that day. This was a nickname, however, which did not hurt Spener's feelings; for accusing his beloved flock of piety, he felt was no reproach; but another word, used to ridicule them, pained his sensitive mind to a degree that would have gratified his enemies had they known it. This was "Spenerist." He knew and taught that there is but one "name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," and he felt that in any way calling the followers of Christ by the name of a human being, was detracting from the honour due to the Saviour. He often said, "I am not fit to wipe the shoes of such men as Luther and Calvin, yet to hear believers called by their names, is painful to me. Oh let us cease from men, and glory in the name of Christ alone."

At one period he was named chaplain to the elector of Saxony. This raised still further opposition to the truth, and all talked and disputed about religion, many without really caring what was truth, so that they were left to enjoy their revellings and feastings. Spener steadily pursued his course,

nor did these disputes seem so sad in his eyes as insensibility and carelessness.

Things were in this state, when, in the autumn of the year 1688, a young artist returned to Saxony from Italy, where he had spent three years studying the works of the great painters. Partly from choice and partly from economy, he made the latter part of his journey on foot. When he was within an hour or two's journey of Dresden, however, he got so foot-sore, that he sat down on the side of the road to wait for some carriage passing in which he could take a seat. After a while he heard one approaching, and looking through the trees he saw that it was drawn by two horses, and came on at a slower place than pleased the lively young artist, who was very impatient to reach his father's house. "I suppose it is some invalid," he thought, "for such fresh-looking well-fed horses would otherwise be urged to a swifter pace." As it was a private carriage he hoped the traveller would observe how tired he was, and would offer him a seat; but as the carriage drew nearer, he perceived that the gentleman within was so deeply engaged with a book, that there was little hope of his taking any notice of him. Our artist, not being of a shy disposition, called out, "May I ask, sir, whether you are going to Dresden?"

"Yes, my friend," was the answer; "if you wish to come with me, open the door, and get into the carriage."

"You are very kind," answered the young man; "and as I have hurt my foot, and my shoe presses it, I will gladly accept your offer, for your horses are too strong to suffer from the additional weight. If my presence disturbs you—"

"Not at all," said the gentleman, interrupting him; "you may see I take my book as a companion, which proves I like company."

"Oh but," said the painter, politely, "your book may be far better company than I am."

"Were I to answer you with strict truth," said the gentleman, "I should say it is so, for the man does not exist whose company would compensate for the loss of this book."

Our friend George felt this a reproof for having intruded into the carriage, but on looking at his companion, he saw plainly no reproof or unkindness was meant. His open countenance and his pleasing smile forbade his thinking so. The gentleman was dressed in a style of simplicity different from the fashion of the day, but in accordance with the want of ceremony with which he had invited George to share his

carriage, and had answered what George, on entering, had said as words of course.

As a portrait painter, George was of course an observer of countenance, and in that of his companion he discerned quietness, equanimity, and a degree of decision and command almost inconsistent with its humility and softness. It was no common countenance, and one that raised a curiosity in his mind to know the character of him to whom it belonged. He was somewhat at a loss how to answer what had been last said, and not liking to remain silent, remarked, "There is nothing more uncomfortable in a long walk than tight shoes. The shoemakers in Prague make them terribly narrow."

"Have you come so far on foot?" asked the elderly gentleman.

"I have come from a much greater distance, though not always on foot. I am just returning to Dresden from Italy, that land which may well be styled the painters' home. Have you ever been there? Have you ever breathed its ambrosial air?"

"Not unless you call the road from Lyons to Geneva, Italy," replied the other with a smile.

"Then you cannot judge of that lovely country," said George, with enthusiasm excited by the very recollection of Italy. "I would rather live in a hut there, than with all that riches can procure in this cold, bleak country. There they know what it is to live."

"And what do you call life?"

"Life!" cried the young man, his eyes sparkling with joy, "I call it life to see mountain and valley, forest and meadow, stream and lake, such as Italy offers, and to hear the poetic language spoken by its people under their sunny skies. I call it life to suck in health and joy with every breath of its warm air. I call it life to enjoy its natural earth and heaven, and the pictures of them by the first-rate masters; to live where the first dawn of morning tells of joy, and the last rays of evening sun tell of pleasure. To live as if in the Hesperides or in Arcadia, whose sons may well be called the sons of the morning; but in this cold, bleak Saxony we scarcely know what joy and light is—all seems so chilled."

"My young friend, you disparage your native land. Do you not think that the wisdom of God has appropriated to every country its own peculiar happiness, and given to every land the climate suited to it? Do you not know that it is through true religion that man becomes the son of light, and that true faith is the morning dawn of heaven?"

"I can easily perceive that Saxony is your native land," answered the artist, evading a direct answer.

"You are mistaken; my native land is in a milder climate than Saxony, but, like Saxony, it is under the sky which God has spread over the earth, and is lighted by the same sun which warms and lights the Hesperides and Arcadia; and, my young friend, if the expression I use is not an improper one, every man's Arcadia ought to be where God has placed him and said to him, 'Here live and work, and walk towards heaven,' for every part of the earth belongs to the Lord, and every part is well fitted to be a place of preparation for heaven."

The young painter looked at his companion with timidity and embarrassment, but seeing nothing but mildness and kindness in his countenance, he felt again attracted towards him, and asked, "But do you live in Dresden, sir?"

"I have done so for the last two years and a half," was the answer.

"Then probably you know my father," said the young man with his usual openness, "the goldsmith, Guldenmeyer in Pirna-street, and my sister Elizabeth. When I went to Italy she was sixteen: she must be nineteen now, and greatly grown. You cannot conceive how delighted I feel at the thoughts of seeing her again. She does not know I am coming to-day, for I wish to surprise her; and I will ask you to let me out of the carriage before we reach the house, and I will get in by a private door. Elizabeth," he continued, without allowing his companion time to speak, "was one of the liveliest girls possible; there was life and animation in all she did and said. Her first letters to me were full of joy and pleasure. I carry all her letters in the breast of my coat. They were delightful to read, but gradually they have changed. I don't know how it is, but by degrees they have become calmer and quieter, not but they are still very loving. But my sister writes about religion so much, and about pious life, and about true Christianity; and she even sent me a book written by a man called Spener—the most tiresome book you ever saw. I found it impossible to read it. This Spener is, I fancy, chaplain to the court of Dresden. Do you know him?"

"Very little," answered the elderly man, with an almost sorrowful smile, "I take the greatest pains to get intimately acquainted with him, but there is something in him that I cannot pierce through and completely understand."

"What do you think of him?" asked George, who seemed glad to hear something about him.

"I am certain of this much," said the other, "that he means to act honourably with himself and others, but the daily increasing knowledge of his shortcoming in the fulfilment of his duties gives him so much sorrow, that nothing but his certainty of the grace of God, and of the strength that he vouchsafes to man to do what is required of him, and the hope that God will answer his prayer and give him that strength, keeps him from retreating from his post."

"That sounds very strange," said George, "and seems to me exaggerated. What is the use of all this self-torturing? Man can do no more than he is able. But," he continued, after a pause, "the name of Spener is very well known; I hear it everywhere, everybody talks of him; some speak good of him, others ill; they say he is the head of a new sect called Pietists. I am particularly curious to know something about him, and to get acquainted with him; for my sister Elizabeth writes about him so continually and praises him so highly."

"But what is the evil they say of him?" asked the elder.

"The evil! If you are a friend of the man, surely you would ask the good they say of him?"

"I am not sure of that, my young friend; the good one man says of another is almost always somewhat mistaken. It is generally said with the blind partiality of friendship, or it proceeds from the not thoroughly knowing the man, or from some selfish reason for preference. There is a something in our human nature that makes us see in truer light the evil than the good that is in others. It is one of the wise arrangements of Providence that man is made better rather by blame than by praise; he becomes more humble, more pious, in short, more Christian when he is not puffed up by praise. Therefore I should like to hear the evil said of Spener just because I am his friend."

"But I have scarcely courage to repeat it, because, though I am but young, I have gained some experience in my three years' travel, and found it wiser to repeat good than evil. There is a proverb that says, 'Slander is a poisoned arrow that returns to wound the speaker;' and suppose the evil were slander."

"But you do not know it to be slander; and as you have been absent so long, and may very fairly think it the truth, which it probably is, you need not fear to repeat it. And," he added, smiling, "I promise you it shall not return to

wound you. So pray speak openly and tell what they say of the new court chaplain."

"Well, since you must know, they say that he is a school-master, not a preacher; that he has no theological learning; that he cannot converse in Latin. Some say that he is a hypocrite; that he appears pious outwardly, but that in reality he is full of hypocrisy and vice; that he is inwardly—it was some words from Scripture about Pharisees."

"Inwardly," calmly interposed the other, "full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness."

"Yes, that was it. Some say he has not one true friend in Dresden. The nobility and gentry dislike him, because they say he preaches against their luxury and dissipation; and even amongst the clergy he is disliked, because it is reported that he said Christ was not preached in the pulpits of Dresden, and that he would preach nothing else; that he pretends to be better than his brethren, which is trying to cast blame on them. They cannot conceive why the elector should send to Frankfort to choose a chaplain, when there are so many more learned and more deserving men in his own dominions. Some of the clergy are angry because they have been ordered by the higher authorities to hold catechetical examinations of the young. Such childish doings were not heard of till Spener set the example, and now all the clergy must turn themselves into schoolmasters. They say, however, that the elector has already discovered his mistake, and seldom goes to hear Spener preach, and never attends his week-day lectures. Others say the elector is so pleased with his proceedings that he has given him his own private chapel for his lectures and for the instruction of the children, and has given orders that his letters shall go everywhere free of postage, in hopes of his instruction thus spreading through the land. I heard this and a great deal more than I have time to tell you. I have passed through Switzerland, Suabia, Franconia, and Bohemia, and in every inn where I stopped, people were talking of Spener; sometimes praising, sometimes blaming him, but certainly the clergy seem everywhere to oppose him."

"It is very melancholy," said the elderly gentleman, and bowed his head with an air of sadness.

"I am sorry," said the painter, "that my talk has made you sad. You are a friend of the preacher, and if I thought you would not repeat to him—"

"You need not care whether I do or not, for he knows it all already. But it is your remark about opposition from

brothers in the ministry that I think so sad, because I know it is really the case."

"But I wonder why it is. We might naturally think that those who from the pulpit preach 'Love one another,' 'Judge not that ye be not judged,' would be the very men to know better."

"Ah," said the other, more sadly still, "it is caused by the envy and hatred that is natural to the heart of man; it is caused by the pride of learning and of worldly wisdom, that drives men to hate what is lowering and humbling; it is caused by the love of ease, which makes us dislike any new plan if we must be troubled to follow it, though we secretly feel it to be right. But sometimes also strife is caused by true zeal for the Lord. Zeal, however, is sometimes mistaken; the apostle speaks of a zeal that is not according to knowledge. Zeal must be accompanied by love, and those who preach reconciliation to God, should practise it with their fellow men. Yet we see this message of reconciliation raise strife everywhere."

"I saw a specimen of it this day," said the young painter. "It was at the little inn at Lorkwitz, not long before I met you. Spener had been lecturing there in the morning, and as I ate my dinner in the public room, I heard a warm dispute between two men, which I suppose the lecture had given rise to. One of these men seemed very learned, but he was pedantic and used very fine words, which, however, I thought rather embarrassed his argument and made it more difficult to understand than the simpler mode of speaking of his opponent. They became warm, and at last angry, and the pedantic gentleman said, as putting an end to further discussion, 'There is no use in my wasting my time trying to convince you of the error of your opinions, for I plainly perceive you are a confirmed Pietist.' I now ventured to ask what was a Pietist, for having lately arrived in this country I was unacquainted with the word, though I have frequently heard it used within the last few days, as I pursued my journey. 'The Pietists,' answered the pedantic gentleman, 'are a sect lately risen amongst us, who set themselves up as better than other men. Their piety consists in condemning, as sinful, the wearing of embroidered neckcloths, brilliants in their shoe-buckles, curled or powdered perukes, gold chains or rings. They fast daily and make long prayers, and look gloomy and wear shabby clothes, and attend Dr. Spener's lectures on Sundays and Wednesdays.' 'You may, perhaps,

understand Latin, and Greek, and Hebrew, and Chaldee,' said the plain spoken gentleman, in a tone of contempt, 'but I can tell you, you do not understand Dr. Spener, nor do you know what true piety is.' They both left the room, and I do not think I understand the term even now."

"A Pietist," replied the other, "is simply one who tries to follow Christ, and who tries to prove his devotion to his heavenly Master more by following his precepts, than by learned disputations and arguments; one who humbly submits to the will of God, even when he cannot understand it, and who takes the revealed word of God as his only rule of life and morals."

"Oh, but it must be something else, for there is no harm in all that, and I have always heard it used as a term of reproach."

"It is so used, and was invented by those who do not love the people of God. The Pietists themselves do not like the designation, and wish only to be called Christians."

"Thank you for your explanation. I hope you are right, for Elizabeth so constantly mentions this Spener in her letters, and I hear him so constantly spoken of as the head of these Pietists, that I feared she was one, and that they were hypocrites. If they are what you say, I hope she is one, and that her newly found religion is not one merely of words. But here we are at the gates, I must get out here, and walk quietly to my father's house."

"Whatever you wish," said his companion, and called to the coachman to stop.

As George got out, the gentleman offered him his hand in token of good will, and the young man heartily returning the friendly grasp, said, "Sir, will you permit me to continue an acquaintance, the commencement of which has given me so much pleasure? May I ask your name, and where I may have the pleasure of meeting you again?"

The elderly gentleman put his head out of the window, and answered with a smile of the greatest good humour, "I hope, young friend, my name may not frighten you. It is Spener. I am the new court chaplain. Give my best regards to your sister Elizabeth. I hope to meet you with her at those lectures which you are inclined to think too childish for grown persons. Come and judge of their simplicity for yourself." And then in a graver tone he added, "The Lord be with you and bless you."

The carriage was some way off, before George stirred from the spot. He felt embarrassed, and thought, "I might have

guessed from his conversation that it was Spener himself. What a fool I was! The carriage, too, is no private one, but the one the elector appropriates to the use of his household. Doubtless it was lent to the chaplain for the journey."

George Guldenmeyer did not find Elizabeth a less loving sister from being a pious Christian, and he was easily persuaded to accompany her to hear gospel truth set forth in simple exposition of Scripture, and he received the seed into good ground prepared by the Holy Spirit. On further acquaintance with Spener, however, George's love and admiration of the preacher became so great, from the natural liveliness and ardour of his disposition, that there was danger of his becoming a Spenerist; for his reverence for the man who led him to a knowledge of salvation became almost idolatry. The word of Spener had little less weight with him than the words of Scripture. Spener found it often necessary to remind George and other friends, that though he did not preach "with enticing words of men's wisdom," yet if the very simplicity of his words and manners led them to lean upon him for teaching, instead of applying to Christ for that Holy Spirit that he has promised to give to those who ask, "that Spirit which will guide us into all truth," they were certainly going astray and following man rather than God.

E. M. P.

COTTON MILLS.

THERE is something attractive in a good-humoured face, expressive of readiness to afford information, or render service. Such a face appertaining to a comfortable looking person, in work day dress, met my gaze as I turned from the survey of one of the manufacturing palaces of the north, and stood aside to avoid being crushed by an enormous dray-horse, which led the way into the mill-yard, followed by two or three others, struggling to the utmost with a magnificent load of cotton bales, just arrived, to be transformed and returned with all the speed of steam on land and sea.

I looked after the heavy dray as it went past me, and then into the before-mentioned pleasant face, and made some slight remark. John Davis needed no further introduction, but drawing closer and pointing after the load, cried with a pleasant smile, "Yes, sir, you see what we're about here,—cotton, sir, cotton! there's nothing like cotton! cotton makes the men nowadays, sir."

"You have some fine mills here, friend," said I; "business seems to prosper among you."

"Ay, ay! nothing like cotton I say, sir;" and Mr. Davis turned his apron over his side, put his hands into his pockets, and the tide of conversation immediately set in. "This mill you've been looking at, and that, and that, and that, all belong to the same firm;" and following the nod of his head east, west, north, and south, I observed the tall chimneys which indicated the busy lives of human labourers.

"Sixty years ago, sir, not a brick of one of them was shaped. Yes, it's sixty years, as I've heard my father tell, since old Hardy (well, he was'nt old Hardy then to be sure, but a poor half-starved lad) came up from B— with all his worldly goods wrapped up in a bundle under his arm. We won't say anything about his shoes, nor his hat, or his jacket, but they weren't much to boast of. He got work in a cotton factory somehow, and as good luck would have it, he invented a new way of printing patterns, that pleased the ladies; and ever afterwards things always came right end up with him. He got on and on, until he was able to employ them that first employed him, and now it's who but he? Why, only a month ago, he gave one hundred and fifty thousand pounds,—yes, sir," and dwelling carefully on every syllable, with increasing impressiveness, he repeated, "one hundred and fifty thousand pounds for the F— estate, and every farthing of it came out of cotton! Then his son, sir, his son gave seventy thousand pounds for an estate up further north—and such grandeur he lives in! There are servants, and carriages, and horses, and company, enough to turn a body's head to reckon up. Ay, ay, cotton's the word, I can tell you, in these parts;" and, with the triumphant tone of unanswerable argument, Mr. Davis concluded his narration, rubbing his hands and eyeing the tall chimney with a merry twinkle, and a patronising smile.

"But, my good friend," pleaded I, "what do you think of industry and perseverance? How much of those went towards the hundreds of thousands of pounds?"

"Well, I don't know much about that," replied Mr. Davis, positing a little, and shrugging his shoulders; "I believe I've been industrious and persevering enough all my life; but I ain't a gentleman after all, and my carriage has got but one wheel to it yet; but I've nothing to do with cotton you see. Yes, yes, it's no use arguing—cotton makes money, and money makes fine ladies and gentlemen all the world over."

I've seen them rise up from nothing, when hard work had no hand in it at all."

"Your aristocracy here cannot boast a long pedigree then, I suppose," said I, smiling, and not unwilling to hear further of Mr. Davis's opinions.

"Pedigree! bless you, we make no count of such a thing; the half of us wouldn't like to talk about our grandfathers; but talk about cotton bales, and we know what riches, and power, and grandeur grow out of."

"It was only the other day," I remarked, "that the praises of wool were sung to me much in the same strain, 'Wool, sir, wool, nothing like wool!' said a person who was pointing out to my notice a splendid mansion built by a manufacturer of woollen goods. And the family of Mr. Watt may set steam to the same tune, and cry 'Steam, steam, nothing like steam!'"

"Well, well, my wits aren't able to get further than cotton, you see," said Mr. Davis, with a look of assumed stupidity. "All I know is, that I wish I'd been born with old Hardy's luck."

"I shall be glad to hear something more of him," said I. "He must be an elderly person now, I suppose."

"Old Hardy? Oh yes, he's about seventy-eight or nine."

"Does he enjoy good health?"

"Well, you see he's a good age, and can't expect to be as brisk as you and I; he's not been so very well of late, I believe."

"Does he often come among his people now?"

"Why no; he used to, till he got infirm, and now the steps are too much for him; and then he's so deaf he can't hear a word that's said to him scarcely, and that makes him cross, so that nobody wants him to come very often."

"All that must be trying to a man of active mind and habits. I suppose he has a fine library, and amuses himself now in pursuits which he had not leisure to enjoy in his youth."

"Not he, indeed; he never had much taste for books, that I remember, but he can't see to read, and one of the young gentlemen or ladies reads the newspaper to him every day. My wife knows them all, because she lived servant with them till they went last year to the new castle."

"Lame, deaf, almost blind," said I, "how very sad! but of course you have some recipe for all this in cotton, Mr. Davis? You have not been sounding the praises of a thing that sets a man up in his prime, and forsakes him when age approaches and health fails."

Mr. Davis looked at me with a comical expression of countenance as I repeated, "Well, what will cotton, or the money that cotton has made, do for your old friend now?"

"Make stuffing for a coffin, and provide a grand funeral one of these days," he replied, seriously. "I don't see anything else it can do."

"Neither do I, my good friend; and since it must come to this, would it not be wiser to sound the praises of something that will not raise a man up, to leave him at last in a worse condition than it found him? The poor boy with his property in his little bundle was in a far better and more desirable condition than the rich, helpless, deaf, cross, blind old man whose heart has been so engrossed with this world that he has made no preparation for another."

"Well, sir," said Mr. Davis, "if you can tell me of anything that does otherwise for a man, I'll try my luck at it at once, that's what I will."

"There's a Friend," I replied, "who after he begins to do us good, never leaves us nor forsakes us. When we are old and grey-headed, he is our staff and strength, and the more entirely we rely upon him, the more perfect are our peace and pleasure. The possessions and enjoyments he bestows do not fade from our grasp as the eye becomes dim and the hand grows feeble; but the light shines brighter, and the hold is firmer as death advances; and the curtain that falls between us and earth, reveals to our everlasting enjoyment the blessings on which our hearts were set—the pleasures at God's right hand for evermore. The medium by which we hold them now is faith, and I feel inclined to cry, Faith, faith, there's nothing like faith! Faith is the gift of God, the receiver of it is a new man, and the only happy man on earth, for he trusts in that which never disappoints, and can never be taken away. Now, Mr. Davis, what can you say for riches in comparison with this? Your story ended with a coffin and a funeral: mine with eternal riches, health, youth, energy, and pleasure."

"Well, sir, I say your sort is the best if people had the sense to believe it; but you see we are all struggling so hard to get on now, that we seem to have no time to think about what comes next."

"Yes, you have time; but because you make wrong estimates of the value of things, you don't regard that which is truly valuable. When sin entered the human heart it just reversed every faculty and feeling. Instead of loving God and fearing evil, we love evil, and therefore dislike God.

Instead of desiring eternal happiness, we determine to content ourselves with happiness of limited duration; and instead of seeking it in God's way, we choose our own way to obtain it. Now faith in God through Jesus Christ puts things into their right places again; and in an instant we see that eternity is of more consequence than threescore years and ten; and the madman who thought otherwise comes to his right mind, and seeks first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and finds all other things, by a blessing on the use of means, added to him. He thinks a soul that shall live for ever of more consequence than a body that may die any day, and provides accordingly."

"Well, I must say you put cotton mills and estates at a discount when it comes to that, and I think there's some sense in what you say, sir."

"You spoke of sense to comprehend it, just now. This is the work of God the Holy Spirit, who alone can teach us to think as God thinks, and estimate things as he does. His Son would not have come into the world to die for us, if anything less could have procured us real happiness. Read your Bible, my good friend, and see if I have said anything untrue. What shall it profit you to gain the whole world, and lose your own soul? Be assured that a little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked, and while you are active and industrious in the duties that God has given you to do, faith in his wisdom and love will make you, in whatever state you are, therewith to be content; and with the prospect of endless bliss through the grace and merit of the Lord Jesus Christ, you would not exchange the hope that cheers your old age, for all the wealth that all the cotton mills in England can produce. Yes, yes, believe it, Mr. Davis, faith, faith, there's nothing like faith—the faith that God bestows on all who seek true riches, and court earnestly the inheritance that cost the precious blood of the true Heir, to make us partakers of his inheritance, and sharers of his rank and honours. Excuse me for speaking so freely, Mr. Davis, but I should like to meet your pleasant face hereafter in a holier, happier world, where, having proved the truth of my remarks, you will accost me with your cordial assent that faith was the best thing on earth, 'nothing like faith,' and then together we will fall before the throne and sing 'Unto Him that loved us,' and gave us grace to believe in him that we might be saved. Farewell, Mr. Davis."

"Good day, sir, and thank you. If it should not be so it

will not be your fault. I've always thought, till now, that this big chimney smoked gold-dust instead of soot, but perhaps I'll sometimes think in time to come that it points up there to something that it's no sin to covet, and is within a poor man's reach."

T.

BLIND JOB S—.

In the autumn of several years ago, I spent a day in a retired country village. Upon inquiring from a friend if old Job S— were yet alive, she replied, with animation, that he was, and that she should like to take me to see him. As his cottage lay on my way home, she proposed that we should set out a little earlier than I had intended, that we might have an opportunity of listening awhile to his truly Christian conversation. From a child I had heard of this old man; and the fact of his being blind had always excited my pity towards him, so that the proposal to visit him was gladly acceded to.

We entered the cottage just as Job and his wife were beginning to take their early tea. Job was seated in a large arm chair by the fire; the small round table, on which the tea-things were placed, being close beside him. I was introduced to him as a relation of some persons, whom he well knew by name, and who were members of the same congregation of Christians with himself.

"Is she a Christian?" asked he. "Does she love the Lord Jesus Christ?" To this I replied myself, expressing my humble trust in the Lord as my Saviour. This drew from this aged Christian some very encouraging words on the blessedness of seeking Christ early in life.

My friend asked him if he would be so good as to mention the circumstances of his conversion, as she thought I should be much interested by the relation. He readily consented to do so, and, after a few moments silence, during which he seemed to be engaged in prayer, he related the following facts, which present a striking display of the sovereign power of our God, and his providential dealing in bringing a lost sinner to himself.

The early days of Job S— were passed not far from the place where he then lived. When young he enlisted as a soldier, and in 1801 served in Egypt, under Sir Ralph Abercrombie. Here he was far from God. After the campaign he returned to England quite blind. The loss of his eyesight does not appear to have been any hinderance to him while in the service of Satan. His conduct for some time showed that

his cruel taskmaster had not lost anything by such a visitation being sent upon him. Job S— walked willingly on in the way to eternal ruin. His "mouth was full of cursing and bitterness;" "destruction and misery" were in his ways; there was no "fear of God before his eyes;" his soul was "dead in trespasses and sins." The old man, in relating this period of his history, degraded and polluted as it was, shuddered at the recollection; but he took occasion from it to magnify the grace of God: lifting up his hands and exclaiming, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief," 1 Tim. i. 15.

But I pass on to the time of his conversion.

In a neighbouring village the meetings called wakes were still kept up, and to this place Job S—, with some of his wicked associates, went and spent their time in diligently doing the works of their master the devil. Job S— especially seemed bent on working "all uncleanness with greediness." While taking a step further to hell by profane and filthy conversation, he was reproved by a degraded woman in these words: "I tell thee, Job, thou art the wickedest wretch at the wakes." Strange as it may seem, this reproof, from such a source, became as an arrow from the Lord, and entered his soul. He stopped and reflected for a moment. What, thought he, am I to be told of my sins by such a character as that? I must be a vile wretch indeed: a poor blind wretch! The idea rested in his mind, and he went home a convinced sinner. A feeling of alarm sprang up in his heart; the wrath of an offended God seemed to be upon him, and hell open to receive him. By the mercy of God, his agonized feelings at length led him to cry for mercy, and it was again true of another sinner, "Behold, he prayeth." Too deep for utterance were the first feelings of his stricken soul. David's words, in the 88th Psalm, he said, best expressed his state at that time: "Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves," ver. 7, 8.

Job S— remained long in this state, which David expresses in the same Psalm: "Thy fierce wrath goeth over me," ver. 16. At length, as the violence of the storm abated, sweet recollections of his early childhood were revived, and his first uttered prayer was that which, when an infant, he had learned on his mother's knee. As a little child, he was again kneeling before God, and asking to be pardoned for Christ's sake. It was a

beautiful illustration of the passage, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matt. xviii. 3. He asked, and he obtained. After this who shall say, "How can these things be?" or ask, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Job S— had experienced a blessed change, a new birth, indeed, and was become a "new creature."

To man, this mighty transformation seems impossible; but how often, when thinking over his history, have I been reminded of the words of our Lord, "I am the light of the world!" Job S— had been walking in the light many years when I saw him on this occasion; from a babe in Christ he had been growing towards the full stature of a man in Christ. Happily for him, he had been instructed in the Scriptures when a child; God had blessed him with a pious mother, and now he was reaping the benefit of her instructions. He united himself with a Christian congregation, and joyfully availed himself of the appointed ordinances of Christ. To him it was a precious privilege to worship with the saints of the Most High. His soul "was satisfied as with marrow and fatness," Psa. lxxiii. 5.

Wonderful was the change wrought in him by the mighty power of the grace of God. Job S— is such an instance as it is possible to consider along with those recorded for our instruction in the Bible; hence it shows the work of the Holy Spirit to be still the same as at first. When Paul first preached Christ, all who heard him were amazed, and said, "Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem?" Acts ix. 21. And then when he writes to Timothy, and expresses his thankfulness to God for making him a minister, as if to magnify the grace of God, he says of himself, "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," 1 Tim. i. 13; and when enumerating the black list of evil doers who shall not enter the kingdom of God, he says to the Corinthian converts, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," 1 Cor. vi. 11. And to the Ephesian believers he writes, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins," Eph. ii. 1.

The history and the experience of Job S— serve to show distinctly, that the gospel of Christ is now, as it was in the apostle's time, "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Let no one, then, despair; but come for pardon, salvation, and peace, to Jesus Christ, "the same

yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." However dark or blind any one may be, his own words are, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness;" and "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life," John xii. 46; vi. 47.

M. W.

A DISTRICT VISITOR'S NOTE-BOOK.

THERE is no duty which the district visitor finds so difficult, if I may judge from my own experience, as that of bringing before the minds of unconvinced, unconcerned sinners the necessity of repentance, and the unspeakable importance of seeking the Saviour now while it is called to-day, "before the night" of death "cometh." Fully to discharge this obligation is confessedly difficult in all cases; but the minister of Christ, or the Scripture reader, goes with the avowed and only object of leading souls to God, and may in a great measure avoid the introduction of any topics calculated to divert him from it; while, on the other hand, the district visitor is expected and enjoined to manifest an interest in the temporal as well as the spiritual concerns of those under her care; and thus there is continual danger lest the one should occupy her time and thoughts to the exclusion of the other.

I was early warned against this evil by the earnest admonition of the watchful pastor under whose direction I had commenced my work. "The one great purpose," said he, "which I desire to have impressed upon my own mind, and which should always be present to yours in visiting the poor, is *to lead them to Christ*; to make, as it were, a step each time, through God's grace, in the way of everlasting life. The step may not be made; no result may appear; but let this be your *object*, the one aim of your inmost soul, and its secret prayer. You will be continually called upon to hear the history of some temporal affliction or anxiety, and it will be easy and pleasant for you to give your sympathy, and sometimes your aid; but remember you are never to rest here. If you are ever tempted to think that your errand is accomplished when you have relieved some bodily suffering or want, be careful that you do not yield to the thought. Never forget that you are sent to minister to the *soul*; and, weak as your endeavours may be, and powerless as your words may seem, think in whose service you are, and who has promised to be with you, and never feel that you have done all you are pledged to do unless the words have been spoken, and the effort made."

This caution sank deep into my heart, and no long period elapsed before experience taught me how greatly I had needed it. On one of the first cold mornings of early winter, I was requested to call and see the young wife of a day-labourer, named Belton, of whom, though living in my district, I knew but little, because I had perceived clearly that I was an unwelcome visitor, whose assistance was not required. Now, the case was different. The husband had been long out of work; the wife, with an infant, a fortnight old, was in need of comforts which they had not the means of obtaining; I went, therefore, secure of meeting no repulse.

After knocking vainly, without reply, I opened the door, and entered the cold, dirty, cheerless room. I advanced to the foot of the stairs, and asked permission to come up. "If you like," said the voice of Mrs. Belton, in no very cordial tones; and, as I ascended the dark staircase, she came forward from the chamber with her infant in her arms. Seeing me, her manner changed; she drew a chair to the warm fire-side, dusted it with a child's pinafore, which was lying upon the floor, and showed me her baby, with something, though not so much as there might have been, of a mother's tenderness in her face. Poor little one! The Sunday newspaper lying upon the window-sill; the fumes of tobacco which filled the room; the repulsive look of an older child, with matted hair and unwashed face, who ceased from teasing the thrush in his wicker cage, as I went in—all spoke of the training that awaited her, if she remained in this world of sin and sorrow.

It was a pitiful story that Mrs. Belton told me, when a few kindly inquiries, and a few expressions of sympathy, had partly unlocked her heart. But, alas! it was no uncommon tale. She had been "used to poverty" all her life, she said; it was "no new thing" to her. I could gather that she had been one of a large family, brought up in extreme indigence; and she had married with no better prospect before her; for her husband, as I knew from others, though the poor woman did not herself tell me, was a man of the lowest character, and on that account continually unemployed.

There was a repelling expression in Mrs. Belton's countenance, even while she was speaking to me of her troubles; and I felt hopeless of doing her any good, for both her spiritual and her temporal need seemed far beyond my means of help. I gave her a little present relief, however, and a few articles of clothing for her baby, which she received with a cold, dissatisfied word of thanks. I then, finding it very difficult to

carry on the dialogue, or to say what in my heart I wished to say, gave way to the feeling of discouragement, bade Mrs. Belton good morning, and made my way down the dark staircase, with a sense of relief in having fulfilled a most disagreeable duty.

I had reached the outer door, and my hand was on the latch, and my foot upon the threshold, when conscience at the instant made me stop. What had I done for the *soul* of this poor, ignorant woman? What step had I taken to lead her to the Saviour? I had indeed spoken of the mercy lately vouchsafed to her, and she had answered with the vague, unmeaning assent which is of such little worth; but what had I said of Him who only could give rest to the weary and heavy-laden, and salvation to the never-dying soul?

With secret self-reproach and shame, I hastily returned. "I wish to leave a little book with you, Mrs B—," I said, in answer to her look of surprise; and, unasked, I again took my seat by the fire-side. I knew that she could read; and I selected from my store a narrative which I hoped might awaken salutary thought. "You have now some quiet time," I continued, "such as you cannot expect to have by and by. Let me ask you to read this little book with attention, and with an earnest prayer that, for Christ's sake, the Holy Spirit would bless it to your soul. If you do this, I am sure you will find both help and comfort from it."

She was silent, and there was no encouragement in her looks, but I proceeded; the weight of my neglected duty still pressing upon my mind. "Shall I stay a little longer, and read a few verses from the Bible, while your baby is asleep?"

She looked down at the infant lying upon her lap. "If you like," she answered, listlessly; and, opening my little Testament, I made choice of a chapter which afforded me a fitting subject with which to connect the gospel message that I was anxious to deliver.

Dear reader, have you ever felt how hard it is to speak of the Saviour whom you love, when the heart of your hearer is cold and uninterested, when the thoughts are evidently wandering, and the eye is attracted by the veriest trifle that comes before it? If so, you can enter into my feelings while trying to awaken some care for her soul in the mind of Mrs B—; and you can sympathize in my disappointment when, the door below being heard to open, and the boy throwing himself down to look through a crack in the floor, his mother, visibly glad of the interruption, endeavoured, by a laugh, to direct my

attention to his contrivance. It was the husband who came in. He was not much older than his wife, but vice had written its characters legibly on his features; and I left the house with a depressed spirit and a deeper conviction that while, in the hope of His blessing, we must leave no means untried, it is God alone who can change the heart.

But there were comfort and encouragement for me under the humble roof to which my next visit was paid. It was but one small room, tenanted by a blind man and his wife, both somewhat advanced in years, and yet not old. The poor man had been deprived of sight by an accident in his boyhood, and having been taught the trade of a basket-maker, through the charity of some benevolent individuals, he gained a scanty subsistence with the help of his wife, an industrious, hard-working woman. On my first visit I had found him alone, and he thankfully acceded to my offer of coming to read to him, wishing me to begin at once. I chose the thirty-seventh Psalm, chiefly, I believe, because it had been a favourite with a dear friend whom I had lost; and surely God accepted the silent prayer with which I began this solemn duty, and gave his promised blessing. The poor man listened as if Christ's words and Christ's promises were alike new to him; and this, as I found afterwards, was indeed the case, for he had lived in the utter neglect of public worship, and his wife was unable to read. He received my simple comments with earnest attention; thanked me again and again for "the beautiful chapter;" and often recurred to it on subsequent occasions with evident delight.

By degrees, as my visits became habitual, I began to perceive that little preparations, which assured me of my welcome, had been made. First, the hearth was clean swept up, and the small room was set in order; then a green cover, no doubt reserved for Sunday use, was put upon the table; another week or two, and I no longer found Mrs. Martin bustling about her household work, if at home, but sitting at her needle, and her husband in his arm-chair by the fire. Last of all, the pet canary, whose singing had sometimes overpowered my voice, was taken down from his place by the window, and made to do penance for his ill-timed melody in the shadow of a small recess below the clock.

These are trifling details to record, but the district visitor knows how cheering is the tale they tell. I had the hope, too, that it was not for my own sake alone, but chiefly for *the message* which I brought, that I was welcomed. After a little

time, during which I had endeavoured, in much weakness, yet I trust with faithfulness of purpose, to lead those poor people to the Saviour, the blind man told me of his great desire to go to public worship, and asked if a boy could be sent from the Sunday school every sabbath morning, to conduct him. His wife, he said, could not manage to go till the after-part of the day, but there was no reason, except his want of sight, why he should stay at home. I need not say that this request was gladly complied with; and a few days afterwards I had the happiness of seeing poor Martin take his place in the house of God, there to hear more fully declared the free invitations of the gospel, and I would humbly trust to be brought, by the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, to Him who is the Light of life.

It was upon the Martins, then, that I had next to call when I left the cheerless dwelling of Mrs. Belton. The blind man was at home alone; a circumstance which I did not regret, because I had frequently remarked that he spoke of spiritual things with less restraint and deeper earnestness in the absence of his wife. This morning he had much to tell me before I began to read. In the previous week he had attended a "Cottage Lecture" for the first time in his life; and the interest with which he had listened to the plain and familiar exposition of Scripture truth might be gathered from the animation of his look and tone. He hoped that they should not miss a single evening throughout the winter. But then came a trouble after this. He had prepared for morning worship as usual the day before, but waited in vain for the coming of his little guide, and upon inquiring it was found that the poor boy was himself kept at home by the want of shoes. I felt sorry for Martin's disappointment, especially as I knew not how to suggest a remedy for an evil which was likely to be of frequent recurrence. The blind man, however, with the readiness of a willing mind, had thought of another plan. He was no longer going to be dependent upon the boy. There was a neighbour round the corner, a decent man, who always went, and he intended to ask him that very night to call for him every Sunday.

I told poor Martin truly that I rejoiced to see his anxiety to attend the house of God, and that I was sure if he went there seeking to learn the way of salvation, and not resting in the outward service, he would find a blessing through the appointed means of grace. I then spoke of the peace of mind, the happiness, which the true Christian, and none but the

Christian, knows. He assented with an appearance of deep feeling, and reverted to the day of my first reading to him as the period from which new thoughts had sprung up in his mind, desires which he had never felt before, and such a sense of his own sinfulness as made him see that there could be no hope for him without the Saviour.

How delightful to speak of the love of God and the atoning death of Christ to one who thus expressed himself, in simple language and with every token of sincerity! Again and again I urged him to pray for the help of the Holy Spirit, who alone had led him thus far, and who would teach him more of Divine truth the more earnestly he sought for it. I repeated to him another of those promises, which he had always seemed to receive with such implicit faith—"Then shall ye know, if ye follow on to know the Lord." After this I read to him from the book that he was beginning to lose;—praying that the gracious Saviour, who in his life of suffering here had compassion for the blind, would mercifully grant to this man light in his soul, that hereafter his eyes might "see the King in his beauty," and "behold the land that is very far off," Isa. xxxiii. 17.

I left the house comforted and strengthened. I felt, as I had often felt before, that the district visitor, little as she may be able to do for others, is assuredly benefited in her own soul by the sincere endeavour. Again I thanked God, and took courage. Again I resolved that, with his help, whether met by indifference like Mrs. Belton's, or by grateful attention such as the Martins had shown, it should be my aim and object amongst the poor, as opportunity was given me, to lead them to "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," John i. 29.

E. W.

TRACT ANECDOTE.

TRACTS AMONG SAILORS.—"A SAINT INDEED."

IN the work of circulating the Scriptures and tracts, sailors themselves are sometimes important auxiliaries. The following case is related by a sailor's missionary:—

"As I was visiting the ships this morning, and giving each sailor a tract, the mate of a vessel asked me if I had any treating upon doctrinal points. I said, I believed I had; and then gave him one on regeneration, after which he gave me the following interesting account. 'Sir,' said he, 'I have to attribute my conversion to reading a religious tract, previous

to which I was a most unhappy man. Being under deep conviction, I had sought for peace in various ways, but could find none. Just at this time a sailor belonging to a ship in the same tier came over to give out a few tracts. He came to our hatchway, and looking down, said, 'Here, shipmates, I have got some tracts for you.' I held out my hand, and he gave me two; the title of one was, 'A Saint Indeed,' the other I do not remember. When we got to sea I took the tracts out of my chest and read them, and I found that they were just what I wanted; light broke in upon my mind, and, by God's grace, attending to their instruction, I was led to the enjoyment of the peace of God, and since then I have gone on my way rejoicing in the Lord."

THE SURE GUIDE.

THE starry firmament on high
And all the glories of the sky,
Yet shine not to thy praise, O Lord,
So brightly as thy written word:
The hopes that holy word supplies,
Its truth divine and precepts wise;—
In each a heavenly beam I see,
And every beam conducts to thee.

When taught by painful truth to know
That all is vanity below,
The sinner roams from comfort far,
And looks in vain for sun or star;
Soft gleaming then those lights divine
Through all the cheerless darkness shine,
And sweetly to the ravished-eye
Disclose the Day-spring from on high.

The heart in sensual fetters bound,
And barren as the wintry ground,
Confesses, Lord, thy quickening ray;—
Thy word can charm the spell away,
With genial influence can beguile
The frozen wilderness to smile,
Bid living waters o'er it flow,
And all be paradise below.

Almighty Lord! the sun shall fail,
The moon forget her nightly tale,
And deepest silence hush on high
The radiant chorus of the sky:
But fixed for everlasting years,
Unmoved amidst the wreck of spheres,
Thy word shall shine in cloudless day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away.

SIR R. GRANT.



PATTY'S LIGHT.

THE shades of an autumn evening were rapidly obscuring the landscape, when Daniel Bligh reached his cottage on the hillside, and gladly threw down the implements with which his day's labour had been wrought, exclaiming that he had scarcely expected to arrive before being overtaken by an approaching storm.

"We're going to have a bad night, or I'm not weather-wise," continued Daniel, "so I think, wife, you'd better stuff a wisp of straw into that broken pane, and make fast the doors and windows at once. Come, Patty, I'm ready for supper. What is the child doing there? Why don't you shut the door? and we shivering here!"

"I thought I saw somebody coming up the hill, father," replied a pleasant-looking girl, who stood holding the door a very little way open; "may be it's a stranger who might ask rest or shelter, or want to know the way or something."

"And what have we to do with that? Shut the door, I say; what makes you trouble your head about strangers?"

"Only because the Bible says, 'Be not unmindful to entertain them,' father, and sometimes they bring a blessing with them."

"Stuff! so you would let in every thief who might cross

the hill, and lose your supper for the hope of a blessing, as you call it."

"Yes, I would take the chance of the supper," replied Patty, smiling, "for when people try to do just as God tells them, he'll take care they don't come to any real harm by it."

"You are a saucy gipsy to argue with your old father, just as if you knew best, because you've got a little school learning into your head; but I'm not to be talked into love of your ways, so just put up that shutter, and stop the light and the warmth from offering any body a welcome here." And Daniel seated himself in his comfortable chair in the chimney corner, while his wife was dishing the savoury fare, the odour of which had for some minutes considerably whetted the appetite of her hungry husband.

Patty perfectly understood the half-pettish, half-indulgent tone in which the old man had seemed to reprove her, and going behind his chair, she gently drew close to him, putting her hand on his shoulder, and whispered, "If father would try to love the Lord Jesus Christ, he would find how pleasant it is to do little things that he bade us, trusting him all the while for what may happen to come of it."

"Ay, ay, I dare say. If you weren't a good girl, Patty, I should say it's all cant. But come, I want my supper; you may say grace if you like, and then you shall read me a chapter. We're going to have a rough night, and I dare say you'll think yourself all the safer for reading your Bible before you go to sleep."

Patty might have been heard to heave a gentle sigh, as her father spoke, for it was not the first time he had manifested a superstitious reverence for the letter of God's word, when a consciousness of human inability to turn aside calamity had crept around his heart, while the spirit of that word was distasteful, and submission to it was far from his thoughts. In fact, practical religion in its true origin was a thing Daniel Bligh ridiculed in every body but his daughter, and tolerated in her, chiefly because she was his only child, the darling of his old age, and both father and mother were proud of everything she pleased to say or do.

"Mayn't I leave the shutter the very least bit open, father, just for a little while, and put up the bar by and by? This is the only house on this side the hill you know, and if any body should lose his way the gleam of light might be a guide for him."

"Well, well, as you will; only if stragglers come this

way, I'll just answer them myself, and they may shelter if they please in the old shed. It is going to be a night, sure enough!—Hark, do you hear the wind?" All did hear it very plainly, and Patty, having arranged the shutter to her satisfaction, sat down to the comfortable table, and with meekness and solemnity offered thanks to God, as her father had desired.

"What's the reason you always finish with 'through Jesus Christ?' " suddenly asked Daniel, after a moment or two.

"Because the Lord Jesus Christ said to his disciples, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you;' and, 'No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.' There is no reason why God should give us anything but trouble and anger, except for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ."

"I can't see that at all, Patty; when we try to do the best we can, one is as good as another."

"Yes, for the Bible tells us that we are all bad together, father, until the Lord Jesus sends us the Holy Spirit to teach us about him."

"Ah, well, I've earned and kept a good character these many years, without any body's help; and I don't think so lightly of a good character as you seem to do, Miss Patty. But you are only a silly young thing yet."

"Father," said Patty, "the Lord Jesus Christ spoke once about heavenly things being sometimes hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes."

"What a memory you've got, child!" said Daniel, with mingled pride in his daughter, and uneasiness at the point contained in her remark; and then hastened to change the subject.

Daniel Bligh was a respectable man, one of the better class of country labourers, having worked on one estate for many years, where he had earned, as he said, a good character; and on this he prided himself so highly, as to imagine he needed nothing further to recommend him to the favour of a heavenly Master, when compelled to resign his place on earth. Indeed, no one had ever presumed to dispute this since Daniel had reformed from some habits of earlier life, until Patty brought home "her learning" from the village school, and sturdily maintained an opinion that the Bible must be right, and furthermore that the Bible said, "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not." Whereupon Daniel thought that some one at the school must have informed his child of certain events which occurred long before she was born, and felt insulted that she should be taught to insinuate that he was "no better than he should be," even now. Patty's

"learning" would then have been cut short, but for her earnest petition to continue at school, where she became the first fruits of the labours of love, of some recent settlers in the neighbourhood; and having learned that "secret of the Lord" which is "with them that fear him," it had become the earnest desire of her heart to interest her parents in the great subject of their souls' salvation, and to adorn the doctrine she loved in her own life and conversation.

As the little party sat at supper, the storm increased in sound and violence; but between the gusts Patty's quick ear distinguished footsteps, which were immediately followed by a gentle tapping at the cottage door. Patty sprang from her seat, but not before her father, striding across the kitchen, had laid his hand upon the latch, and demanded who was there. A voice replied, that a stranger who was hastening to the nearest village had lost his road, and sought either direction, or a temporary shelter from the fury of the increasing storm.

"You will let him come in I'm sure, father," said Patty, beseechingly. Daniel looked at her, hesitated a moment, then raised the latch, and a gentleman of benevolent aspect, in a tourist's dress, stepped into the cottage.

"I have miscalculated distances to-day," said he, "and shall be grateful for your directions to the nearest place where travellers can be accommodated, and where I may remain at least until daybreak."

"The night is so wild and dark, he will never find the way, father," said Patty. "You know there's the brook to cross, and it will be swelling with the rains; he cannot see the stones to step upon."

"Well, sir," said Daniel, "you had better sit down here awhile at any rate, for Patty doesn't think the shed good enough for you I can see. And if the night gets no worse, I'll guide you down the hill myself."—"That's a dear father," said Patty softly, as she passed him to take the stranger's hat and stick, while her mother inquired after the condition of his coat, and placed a chair within the benefit of the blaze and sparkle of the cheerful wood fire, kindly inviting him to partake of their homely, but wholesome and savoury fare, at the same time carving a fresh slice of bacon, which hissed aloud in the pan.

"This is indeed a change," said the traveller, "and I gratefully accept your kindness, thanking God for guiding my steps this way, though I must certainly have wandered on,

cold, hungry, and weary, and very soon half drowned besides, but for the light that gleams through your window."

"That was Patty's light," said her father; "if she wasn't a self-willed child, the shutter would have been closed and barred long ago; but she got some odd fancy about wandering travellers, and I don't often care to be hard with her."

"Then, next to God, I must thank you, my kind young friend," said the stranger, "and, for the sake of other benighted travellers, hope that Patty's light may long shine on the hill."

Patty, who was re-arranging the table, acknowledged the stranger's address by a modest curtsy, while a thought swelled into a prayer from her heart, that the stranger who spoke of thankfulness to God might be able to say something to her father about Jesus Christ and a sinner's salvation.

After seeing his guest comfortably refreshed, Daniel rose and opened his door to look out, when he was instantly assailed by such a terrific gust of wind and rain, as afforded sufficient evidence of the state of things outside, and hastily closing it he returned to the fire.

"You'll be like to stop here till daybreak, sir, I reckon, for it isn't fit for a dog to go out to-night; and may be wife and Patty will make up a bed as good for a weary head as dame Best could give you at the Red Cow."

Again the stranger expressed his thanks, and after some little friendly contest about "trouble" and "no trouble," the matter was settled, and the little party drew closer to the fire as the wind howled louder, and the rain beat more fiercely around the dwelling.

"It's a wild night for sure," said Daniel, "and with your leave, sir, Patty shall do as she was going just as you came to the door—read us a chapter in her Bible."

"May be the gentleman will read for us, father," said Patty, quickly.

"I like you to read to me; it doesn't need better," said Daniel, in a tone which Patty never controverted.

"And I shall greatly prefer to listen," said the stranger kindly, "nothing could more rejoice my heart."

Patty, ignorant of affectation, simply proceeded to do as she was bidden, reading in a calm and gentle voice the 90th and 91st Psalms.

"That's good reading enough for anybody," said Daniel proudly.

"You have chosen comfortable words, my young friend," said the stranger; "may I ask if you feel their powerful

meaning? To dwell in 'the secret place of the Most High,' to abide under the 'shadow of the Almighty,' is no light blessing. Do you know the way to such a safe and happy resting place?"

"Is it not that 'being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,' sir?" said Patty, timidly.

"It is indeed," said the stranger, "and they who come to God through the death of his Son, find that 'all things' are theirs in him. Pardon, safety, peace, enjoyment in a loving Father's arms. I rejoice to find that you know something of this blessedness. And you, my kind host, I trust you have accompanied your child into this only refuge for sinners."

"I don't see the case just as Patty does," said Daniel, awkwardly. "You see she went to school where some well-meaning ladies have it all their own way, and she learned what they taught her, and keeps to it too."

"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God," gently repeated the traveller. "A greater teacher than good ladies must visit that school."

"Yes sir," said Patty, looking up intelligently to the speaker, "while the kind ladies taught me things about Jesus, I know that 'God did reveal them' to me at the same time 'by his Spirit.'"

"It doesn't seem such a wonderful thing for Patty to be saved, as she calls it," interrupted Daniel. "She hasn't done much amiss since she came into the world."

"And yet she trusts to the only Saviour, who died, 'the just for the unjust, to bring us to God;' and is saved from wrath through him, and finds acceptance with God only by him. As regards the need of a Saviour, we are all alike, for 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.'"

At this moment the storm which had been raging without, seemed to have reached its climax; a whirlwind was sweeping furiously past, and a loud crash close to the cottage followed in the momentary lull. The whole party started, and Daniel himself changed countenance.

"There's the old shed blown down," cried he; "I'm glad I didn't leave the cow there to-night."

Then came a burst of hail which clattered over their heads, imposing an awed silence upon each. When it was possible to be heard, the stranger, looking up to the roof, remarked,

"This is indeed a fearful storm! Why is it that we do not feel that pelting hail?"

"Why? Because you've got a strong roof over head, I

should think, and no mystery," said Daniel, in surprise at the question.

"And why are we not blown away in this terrific gale?"

"Just because, again, there are four stout walls round you, I should think," said Daniel.

"And why were we not sitting in your old shed?" again suggested the stranger.

"Why? Because we have the sense to prefer a strong, well-built house that is able to stand a storm, before a tumbling old shed that wanted only a blast to crush it," replied Daniel, as much surprised at the development of his own argumentative powers, as at the supposed folly of such questions.

"My kind host," said the stranger, "you have spread before us an emblem of God's precious gospel. 'The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,' and must sweep all before it to everlasting destruction, excepting those whom a strong shelter covers, whom a strong arm guards, whom a sure foundation supports. Jesus Christ, the Holy One of God, alone could endure the weight of that storm without being crushed beneath it, and he did so for sinners. He endured God's righteous anger against sin, that whosoever cometh to him, believing in him, should not perish beneath it, but have everlasting life. He is the strong roof to shelter them, keeping out all the indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish that they deserve, and shutting them safely in to all the warmth and comfort, peace and happiness of his Father's house. He alone can clasp in the strong embrace that no power can rend; while all who trust to their own goodness, or rest on any other foundation, will one day be found, like your fallen shed, a helpless, baseless ruin. Let us kneel down and ask now for grace and sense to prefer the well-built refuge on the sure foundation, and accepting the offered hand of love in Christ Jesus, enter into the secret place of the Most High, and be as safe from wrath and danger, and the punishment of sin, as we have been under your good roof to-night from the violence of this terrific storm."

Daniel Bligh had never heard the gospel in a storm before; his conscience was busy; and, confounded and overcome, he covered his face, and knelt with the stranger to pray a real prayer before they retired to rest.

With the bright clear morning, after yielding to the entreaties of the little family to partake of their early meal, and to speak to them more of Jesus and his complete salvation, the traveller went on his way, guided by Daniel in person,

and endeavouring to return the kindness by pointing out the narrow way that leadeth unto life, in the footprints of the man of sorrows, as for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross and despised the shame.

"And for you, my dear young friend," said he, as he took leave of the grateful Patty, "I need only repeat my wish that your light may long shine on the hill—not only that which lighted my way last night, but that which God's grace has kindled in your heart, the light of the knowledge of his glory, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ. May it glow bright and warm within to your own happiness, and shine faithfully and steadily without, to guide other wanderers to the haven of rest, and to 'glorify your Father which is in heaven.'" T.

FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST.

FELLOWSHIP is joint participation, partnership, communion,—enjoyment of this partnership, in the privileges and benefits which it brings. The Christian's state is fellowship with God, fellowship with God as a Father in Jesus Christ. This is his present state; this will be his everlasting state: he shall never perish, for his Father is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck him out of his Father's hands. He has also a real enjoyment of this state, a blessed consciousness of it, so that it is an actual state, and he can say "Truly my fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

This is a *fellowship of God* with the Christian. It is the gift of God to him. He was once far off; but he has been brought nigh to God by the blood of Jesus Christ. He was alienated from God by nature, and an enemy to him by wicked works; but he has been reconciled through the Saviour's death in the body of his flesh. He was condemned, and under the just anger of God; but the Son of God has been made a curse in his stead. He has borne his sins in his own body on the tree. He has been made a sin-offering instead of guilty man, that man might be made the righteousness of God through him. God has thus reconciled the guilty man to himself. He has blotted out his transgressions, and presented him holy, unblamable, and unreprouvable in his sight, in the obedience and death of his own dear Son. Now, man has God's fellowship with him, and has received from God the word of reconciliation. He has a present state of peace with God, which is no more to be broken. God is his Father and his Friend. God will be his Father and his Friend for

ever. God has justified him freely through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus his Lord. And there is no more condemnation to him because he is in Christ. Whom he has justified, them he hath also glorified. And nothing shall separate them from that love of God which is in Christ Jesus the Lord. This is God's fellowship with man. It is the Divine gift to the Christian man. God is no longer an enemy to him, but is one with him through the gift of his Son for him. God loves him, meets him in peace, unites with him, walks with him; works with him, and of his own grace bestows upon him this blessed gift of everlasting fellowship with him, in his Son.

It is *man's fellowship* with God. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in the mind and heart of man. Because God has fellowship with him, he has adopted him as a son, and has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into his heart, teaching him to love him as a Father, and to call him Father. This Divine Spirit has awakened him from his carelessness, has convinced him of sin, has given him a true repentance, and has enabled him to believe in Christ to the saving of his soul. The Spirit has thus converted him from the error of his way to God. He has given him a new heart, and a new spirit, and transformed him in the renewing of his mind. Now he is no longer an enemy to God, or a wanderer from God, or a rebel against God. He is now one with God, reconciled in his heart to God, loving him, and desiring to serve him, obey him, and enjoy him for ever. His fellowship with sin, and the world, and Satan, is broken off. He has a fellowship with God, and it is his delight and effort to maintain it, and carry it out, and to walk with and live under its influence. Being led by the Spirit of God, he is now a child of God. The Spirit of God witnesses with his spirit. He has a blessed consciousness and enjoyment of this reconciliation. * Old things have passed away, all things have become new, and his part, his concord, his communion, the agreement of his heart, are with Christ. And he now walks with God his Saviour in newness of life. By this one Spirit he has access to the Father, in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This fellowship with God is *maintained by the power of the Spirit of God* dwelling within him. He leads him to make a solemn dedication of himself to God, a faithful, secret covenant with God. In his own closet he is led to give up his heart to the Saviour's possession, and to the Saviour's service, really, spiritually, consciously. He feels himself no

longer his own. He is bought with a price, and he would glorify God in his body and his spirit, which are his. Everything connected with the Lord's service becomes now a pleasure, and an attraction to him. He is led to be habitual in prayer, deeply interested in the word of God, finding enjoyment in the worship of God, and in the assemblies of his people. His thankful heart rejoices in the Lord. His watchful spirit fears the power of sin. His gratitude to Christ leads him to labour for the welfare of others. He desires to possess, and to display the mind of Christ; in every relation in which he is placed. He loves to think of the Lord who has become his salvation. His meditations of him are pleasant to his heart. With joy he draws the living water out of the wells of salvation. As he has received Christ Jesus the Lord, so he strives to walk in him, in all things adorning his doctrine, and magnifying his grace. He thus cultivates and maintains that spiritual mind which is life and peace. This is the work of the Holy Spirit within him. This is the way in which God brings the heirs of salvation to glory. Thus he prepares his children for himself. Thus they make their calling and election sure. By the work of faith, and patience of hope, and labour of love, they manifest their election of God. God maintains his fellowship with them, by the unchangeable purpose of his grace, and the unfailing word of his promise. And they maintain their fellowship with God, by the unceasing power of the Holy Spirit, who dwells with them, and walks with them, and continually renews and strengthens them. God becomes their God, and they become his people. And this is for ever; an everlasting covenant, never to be forgotten.

This is a fellowship *in glorious blessings*. The parties in it are partners in an inheritance of everlasting glory. There has been a mutual interchange of the property of each. There is a gracious participation in the final property of the union thus formed. Guilty man had nothing but guilt and condemnation. He was without life, dead in sin. This fearful load of guilt was laid upon Christ. Its responsibility was assumed by him. Its condemnation was imputed to him. He endured it, completely, finally, triumphantly. Thus all that man had was laid upon Christ. And he has borne his griefs, and carried his sorrows. He has been wounded for man's transgressions, and bruised for his iniquities. There has been a perfect transfer of guilt and condemnation, taking it off from man, who possessed it, and would have sunk under

it, and putting it upon Christ, who was completely innocent of it, but could bear it and atone for it. There has been an equally real transfer of the perfect obedience of Christ to guilty man, justifying the ungodly, and imputing righteousness without works, even the righteousness of God by faith, to those who believe. All the merit of the Saviour's work is given to man, all its rewards and attainments are given freely to man, all the glory which it has deserved and purchased is bestowed upon man. The sinner is thus completely justified in Christ, and with Christ, and because Christ is justified. He is a partaker with Christ. Personally, poor and destitute; in union, rich and glorified. In himself a sinful worm; in Christ an heir of God, and a fellow-citizen with the saints. In this fellowship, he is a joint heir with Christ of a kingdom which cannot be removed. He has the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to dwell with him for ever. He is thus a partaker of everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace. God has become his God, and has provided for him a city of everlasting habitation. These are the blessings which constitute the substance of this fellowship with God. All that God can give to man, all that man's nature is competent to receive, is secured to the Christian in this fellowship in an everlasting covenant. And all things are his, because he is Christ's, and Christ is God's.

Who can estimate the blessings of this union, the blessedness of this condition? What want remains unsupplied? What defect is there in man's condition to be met? How rich, how full, how abounding in mercies, is this state of grace! Happy are the people who know the joyful sound. Happy are the people whose God is the Lord. God has said unto their souls, I am thy salvation; and in the blessed experience of his renewing and comforting Spirit, they can say, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

Dr. Tyng.

OLD WILL CONNELL: OR, THE POWER OF THE WORD.

ONE fine summer morning as John Brennan, an Irish Scripture reader, was wending his way along the high road in a remote district of his own country, he was overtaken by a gentleman driving alone in a phaeton. Looking up, he recognised him as Mr. Marshall, a wealthy and benevolent Englishman, who had lately become the purchaser of a large estate, through part

of which they were then passing. Brennan had heard much of Mr. Marshall, as one sincerely desirous to do good, and as being influenced mainly by that desire in his late purchase; but, altogether unprepared to deal with the mental and moral degradation in which he found his new tenantry sunk, he had begun to be sorely discouraged, and almost to despair of gaining access to their minds on any subject beyond what might relate to their mere animal necessities.

John Brennan took off his hat respectfully as Mr. Marshall came up. "Good day, friend," said the latter courteously.

"A good day to you, sir," returned John; "and it is a good day for poor Ireland when such gentlemen as your honour 'come over and help her.'"

Not quite satisfied of the sincerity of this speech, Mr. Marshall replied rather coldly, "Ay, that is if they come over with that intent, or if, so coming, they find the matter practicable. For myself, I hardly know yet what my intentions are, far less what may be my opportunities. I am still 'a stranger in a strange land.' Do you live in this neighbourhood?"

"Well, no, sir; I'm rather a stranger here myself. Indeed I can't be said to live any where in particular," added John, smiling; "but though I don't know much of these parts, I know you, sir, by sight, and have heard from many of your kindness."

"My kindness, as you call it, remains to be proved," returned Mr. Marshall, in the same cold and cautious manner; "for to say truth, I find no small difficulty in exercising it, save in a way that does no lasting good—I mean giving away money."

"Indeed, sir, I agree with your honour, *that* does little or no good, except in the case of such as can't work. But it does twenty, ay, a hundred times the good, teaching people to help themselves, that it does helping them out of your own pocket, and asking them to do nothing. That was a wise word Paul wrote, sir, 'If any will not work, neither should he eat.'"

Mr. Marshall's countenance relaxed a little, and, looking more kindly towards his fellow-traveller, he inquired, "And how do you help yourself? what is your occupation?"

"I'm a Scripture reader, sir,"—and John Brennan again raised his hat, partly out of respect to the querist, but more out of reverence for the word of God which it was his privilege to read and circulate.

"Indeed!—a Scripture reader! Well, I wish you success in your work, friend; more, than, I confess, I expect for you."

I value the Bible much, very much, as an instrument in improving the condition of Ireland. But I own I am rather sceptical as to the possibility of opening a way for the Bible into the hands of such poor creatures as I have conversed with, or rather talked to, here."

"Ah! sir, the Bible will open a way for itself, if we will only trust it. The psalmist says, 'The entrance of thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.' True, indeed, when the mind has grown old in ignorance, it often seems to us as if it was lost entirely; but where we can't find it, the word of God can, for, as Paul tells us, that it's 'sharper than any two-edged sword.' And again, writing to the Ephesians, he says, 'It is the sword of the Spirit,' and if the Holy Spirit wields it, sir, 'twill do its work."

"All true, I make no doubt, if you begin early enough; but what can you do with the old?"

"Have patience with them, sir; take them like children, 'here a little and there a little,' as the prophet says. To be sure, 'tis not every old man or woman will submit to that; but some will, and one will keep another in countenance, and good will be done with the Lord's blessing; and if only to a single soul, that's precious in his sight. Oh, sir, if we can only get one ray of his light into the mind, 'tis marvellous how it will spread. If it would not delay you too long on your way, I could tell you of an old man I knew a few years ago; and whenever I think of him I say, truly, 'With God all things are possible.'"

"I shall be glad to hear his story," returned Mr. Marshall, "and am quite willing to be convinced if I am in error. But come, take a seat beside me, you can tell and I can listen more conveniently then. No apologies, no apologies," he continued, with a quickness of speech, and decision of manner, that commanded silence and obedience. "Now, then, your story."

"I have not much of a story to tell you, sir," replied Brennan; but the little I have is for God's glory. The name of the man I speak of was William Connell—"old Will Connell," he was called by the neighbours, many of whom, not young themselves, never remembered him anything but old. He lived in the next county, in a lone wild place up in the mountains, far from the means of grace, which, indeed, he cared nothing for. He called himself a Protestant, but he married a Roman Catholic, and that added darkness to darkness, and brought sorrow too, as seldom fails. His two sons followed their mother's religion, and, of course, they also married Roman Catholics. He had two daughters; one married a

Roman Catholic; the other, poor creature! was an idiot. So you see, sir, there was not a chink, as one may say, by which light could enter into his mind through the means of his own family; no, nor of his neighbours either, for not one among them knew the Bible, or how to say a word to Old Will about his soul.

"Well, sir, you may be sure his family and neighbours did all they could to turn him to popery; but though he knew no difference but the difference of name between the one religion and the other, he resisted all their efforts better than many a wiser man. It was only obstinacy, and blind attachment to the church of his fathers, to be sure, but it kept him from going further from the right way, as it pleased the Lord.

"This was the state of poor Will Connell when Mr. D. came to be curate of the parish. He was an active, pious young man, and lost no time in searching out for any, so-called, Protestants, that might be hidden in the retired parts so long that it was hardly known they were living at all. Among the rest he found out Will, and was grieved that an old man, who could not live long, should be sunk in such stupidity and ignorance. I am sure, sir, that nothing but firm faith in the power of the word, by the Holy Spirit, could have led Mr. D. to pay him a second visit, for it seemed as if 'darkness' and 'the shadow of death' had settled down on the poor man's soul. The simplest truth he seemed unable to comprehend, and if at any time he appeared to take in what was said, the next time Mr. D. called it was forgotten.

"I had been schoolmaster in the parish for some time, and one day Mr. D. came to the school while I was teaching one of the junior classes their Scripture lesson. When I had dismissed them, he said to me, 'I'm thinking, John Brennan, of taking old Will Connell, as you do these little ones, and getting him to commit some simple texts to memory. Who can tell what the effect may be?' Well, sir, he did it; and hard enough work it was to get Will even to repeat the words after him; but perseverance will do wonders, and at last he did succeed in getting the old man's memory to retain a number of precious texts of Scripture, such as, 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin;' 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;' 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

"Sir, you would hardly believe the effect that this produced on old Will after a time. Understanding, conscience, heart,

all awoke, little by little, as if from a dead sleep; and he at last not only understood the texts he had committed to memory, and which had often been explained to him; but when whole chapters were read, he took in their meaning, seeming as if he would devour them, as one may say: he might have said like Job, 'I have esteemed the word of God's mouth more than my necessary food.' That word, 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,' laid hold of him above all; and the latter days of his life were almost entirely given to prayer and praise. Sir, I never saw the power of the gospel to make wise unto salvation more clearly than I did in poor old Will's case.

"About a fortnight before his death, his idiot daughter, who was the only one living in the house with him, by some accident set fire to a heap of wood that was piled up between his bed and the fireplace. The flames reached the bed where he lay, unable to help himself, and not only destroyed it with his clothes, but burned himself severely before he could be removed. The hut was burned to the ground, and one of his sons removed him into another close by. There he was, lying in a dark damp room, with no bed but straw, and scarcely anything to cover him, when Mr. D. called to see him. As soon as Will perceived him, he said, 'Oh, sir! I must tell you what I saw last night; I was lying awake, thinking of all I suffered, and was grieving and troubled at the loss of my clothes, when a beautiful man, just about your age, sir—the finest man I ever looked on, I couldn't describe to you the beauty of his countenance—came and stood at the foot of my bed. 'Don't be grieving or troubled, Will,' says he, 'at the loss of your clothes, for I have a fine white garment ready for you.' 'So, sir, I'm not troubled any more now, for I know the white garment is waiting, and it will soon be put upon me.'"

"Strange!" said Mr. Marshall. "The poor man was dreaming, I suppose."

"Well, I incline to think he was dreaming, sir, though he himself was sure he was wide awake. A dream often comes like a reality, when the heart is full of some great thing, as his was then. At any rate, it was a happy token of the state of his mind to have such a dream; for if we don't think of heavenly things when we are awake, we'll hardly think of them when we are asleep. Old Will died in a few days after, trusting in the Lord Jesus, and rejoicing in the certainty of being with him for ever."

"It is certainly an encouraging case," observed Mr. Marshall, "and should instruct us to have patience with the dullest and most ignorant."

"Ah! yes, sir; patience, that's the thing. Why, we can teach nothing to a child without patience, much less to one grown up in ignorance, and, least of all, to an old person that's almost a child again. And the soul is worth it: if Jesus gave his blood, we may well give our time and trouble for it. 'Let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.' I have seen light 'come into some minds, sir, as the stars peep out when the day is nigh gone; you look to the west, and there's one just beginning to twinkle; in a while you look to the east and there's another, and then another, and another, till the whole sky is lit up with their glory. So I have seen it with some minds: it was only starlight, to be sure; but the stars themselves shine from heaven, and the light of many of them is reflected from the sun. Ah! sir, I often think there's many a soul, basking now in the beams of the Sun of righteousness, that never got beyond starlight here. But it was a star that led the wise men to Christ."

"And now, sir," said John Brennan, "offering you many thanks for the kind attention you have given to my humble remarks, I must leave you here; this is my way," and he pointed to a narrow lane leading to a small hamlet which lay in view.

"Many thanks to you, my good friend," replied Mr. Marshall, "for what you call your humble remarks. I trust they have done me good, and that we shall often have opportunities for conversing together on the best means of improving the condition of this misled and neglected people. One saying of yours I hope to have stamped upon my memory, 'The Bible will make a way for itself to the human heart if we will only trust it.'"

M. B. T.

THE LOSING GAME.

THERE is a remarkable drawing, by the celebrated artist Retsch, entitled "THE CHESS PLAYERS." It represents Satan, the spirit of evil, playing with man for his soul. The place chosen is a vault, the arch of which is formed by two lizard-shaped beings, whose heads, partly bird and partly locust, as well as their stunted, misshapen claws, hold closely to the two pillars, down which they seem to be creeping. The chess-table is a sarcophagus, or stone coffin, at one end of

which sits a young man, whose countenance bears the marks of deep and pensive thought.

At the other end is Satan, seated in a large chair, on one of whose arms is a lion, with open mouth, and grasping in one of its claws a human skull. A large cloak is thrown round him, the emblem of that concealment in which his purposes are hidden, nothing appearing from beneath it but his long and claw-like hands. In his cap there is a long and crooked cock's feather, which is said to be the ancient emblem of what is dark and suspicious. The countenance is a mixture of the noble and the bad. Bold malignity, and scornful, half-triumphant hate are blended with lofty intellect. The chin rests on his hand, whilst his piercing eye is fixed on his intended victim.

In the background, and partly concealed, stands a loving, gentle being, the guardian genius of him who is playing that awful game. She looks on in sadness, and her wings are extended and her countenance half turned away, as though just about to depart.

Looking at the game itself, we find that of Satan's pieces the king represents the arch-enemy, again muffled in his cloak, though easily recognised. The queen is Pleasure, a female figure scantily dressed, and extending a flowing bowl. The officers are vices. There is Indolence, a misshapen form with the head of a swine, seated on a rough block of wood; Pride, a grave figure, moving stiffly forward, his head tossed backward and wearing a feather-crown, his heels armed with spurs, an order glittering on his breast, one hand bearing a full purse, the other stretched out in the attitude of command, whilst behind there is seen an outspread peacock's tail; Falsehood, a form with the head of a cat, and its skin spotted like a tiger, one hand being laid on the breast in token of sincerity, the other hiding a dagger behind the back; Avarice and Envy, in one, a bent lean figure, eating its own hand, and pressing a casket under its arm; and Unbelief, a horned figure, overthrowing a cross with its foot. The pawns are Doubts—small harpy-shaped forms, with bat-like wings and piercing teeth.

On the side of man, the soul itself is king, and the queen is Religion, a tall, majestic figure, with ample wings, one hand extended as if offering protection, the other bearing a cross. The officers are Hope, with her anchor; Truth, bearing a lighted torch and reflecting shield, and standing like a castle by the side of religion; Peace, bearing a palm; Humility, with her head bowed as if in prayer; Innocence, a child with

confiding and outstretched arms; and Love, represented by two children embracing each other, with a star gleaming above them. The pawns are angel-heads.

The state of the game is most critical. Love, Innocence, and Humility are gone, and Satan is just taking away Peace. Pleasure, Unbelief, and evil Doubts are pressing on against Religion, who still stands calm and serene, the safeguard of the soul. All that the man has done is to vanquish Anger and overcome a single doubt. The game, though not absolutely lost, is very nearly so. Below, on the front of the sarcophagus, is Psyche, the soul, covering her face with her hands in terror, as two death's-heads seize upon her—a representation of the destructive tendency of Satan's devices, and the consequent misery of the soul.

The whole is a masterly and affecting allegory, and suggests to a reflective mind a train of impressive thoughts.

The existence of Satan is a reality—not an exploded superstition of an ignorant and credulous age, but a truth. It is not less true that he is in constant intercourse with mankind, and that there is not a human being on the earth who is not exposed to his temptations. People may speak lightly and irreverently of these things, but they can be set aside only by the denial of the plainest statements of the word of God.

It is Satan's aim to destroy the soul—nothing short of that. There have been times, as when the Lord Jesus Christ dwelt on the earth, when he was permitted to inflict physical evil; and he delighted in it: but his great aim has ever been to destroy the soul. The proof of this is very simple. Our Lord declared that he was "a murderer from the beginning." The apostle Peter speaks of him as "a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." None knows better than he, that "the wages of sin is death." And yet he tempts men to sin. The greatest enemy we have then is Satan; for he seeks to inflict a destruction which will endure for ever, by involving us in the irretrievable loss of the soul.

The devices of Satan are characterized by the utmost craft. Any sensible man would say, "If I am to have a foe, let me have one whose enmity is open, who scorns concealment, and who does what he does in the view of all the world. I may be more frequently annoyed by the manifestations of his enmity; but I shall at least know where to expect whatever stroke he may direct against me, and how to guard against it." Most commonly Satan effects the destruction of the soul by

craft. It was by a subtle, flattering falsehood that he introduced sin into the world. He was a liar, as well as a murderer, from the beginning; and that is his character still. He is not seldom "transformed into an angel of light." Yet it is possible, by the aid of God's word, to unmask his devices and to exhibit them in their true tendencies.

It is a fact that sin is already in the world. Man's innocence is gone. Instead of that spirit of true humility which bows in lowly reverence before God, and esteems its fellow-creatures better than itself, there is a spirit of pride which vaunts its pretensions even in the presence of its Judge, and which seeks to lord it over its fellow-men. The law of love is banished from the soul; and the consequence of all is the loss of true peace. Now it is the purpose of salvation to repair all this ruin. That is the very design for which the Redeemer died, and for which his gospel is proclaimed. Satan aims to turn man away from the gospel; and it is in this that his subtilty is especially displayed. He cannot compel them to reject it, but he tempts them to do so, and it is in the kind and the manner of his temptations that he shows his craft. The temptation which would be available in one instance, or at one particular time, would be powerless at another. He therefore adapts his seduction to the character and the circumstances of those whom he endeavours to destroy.

He tempts some, and especially the young, with sinful pleasure; allures them by the charms of gay society; presents to them the sparkling cup of intoxication, and incites them to the indulgence of unhallowed lust.

To those for whom such pleasure has no charm, he offers what are sometimes called the solid advantages of life. As he took our Lord to the summit of that lofty mountain, and said, as he showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me;" so now, presenting before men the glittering prospect of honour, and power, and wealth, he seeks to turn their thoughts away from the gospel, and to involve them in crimes which are sure to drown them in destruction and perdition.

In another he fosters the spirit of indolence, because he knows that the unoccupied mind is especially open to his wiles; whilst in other cases evil and tumultuous passions are quickened, whose tendency is, he well knows, to indispose the soul to yield to the gentle influences of the cross.

Yet to whatever vices he may tempt the soul, he has to

contend with the opposing power of conscience ; and the voice of conscience is powerful in exact proportion to the degree in which it is enlightened by the truth of the Bible. Men who do not by any means believe in Christ to the saving of the soul, are restrained from sins they would otherwise commit, because of the barrier which is interposed by the authority of conscience. Then arises the wish—and Satan is ever ready to foster that wish—that the Bible were not true. The wish becomes father to the thought ; the attention is turned away from that which might lead to the persuasion of the truth of revelation ; difficulties are magnified ; and by and by the cross is spurned, and the man treats the gospel as a dream or a lie.

These are a few of the devices by which Satan seeks to destroy the soul. And it may be observed respecting all of them, that in nothing is his craft more obvious than in the gradual manner in which he leads the sinner onward, all the while concealing from him the ultimate issue of his course. If a man could see beforehand his own picture at some future period of his life, when his sins have gained the complete ascendancy, he would most likely shrink back in utter dismay. Only present indulgence is pleaded—often only one such indulgence—and that, it is suggested, will leave the soul as free as ever. Yet every step is as the sure, though gradual progress of a *losing game* ; and often, ere the man has the slightest suspicion, he is lost beyond recall.

Reader, this subtle foe seeks your ruin. Try then to detect his wiles. Let it be a settled thing with you, that this sensual indulgence, whatever it may be—that forbidden pleasure—that prospective advantage which lures you from the path of duty—are all so many wiles by which Satan would lead you on to death. It is of much importance to be aware of his devices.

But do you desire deliverance from his machinations ? There is one, then, who can deliver you. Christ Jesus died, that he might pluck you from the hand of Satan. On the cross of Calvary he destroyed “ him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Believing in Christ, that guilt which renders you now an heir of wrath, will be cancelled, and at the same time there will be bestowed on you a grace which, renewing your heart, will enable you to maintain against him a successful resistance. And as you exercise all watchfulness, and live in the spirit of habitual prayer, you may expect that grace to be continued so long as you are exposed to temptation, and to issue at last in your final salvation.

S. G.

THE PATH TO THE UNION ; OR, WHERE DOES IT
LEAD TO?

As I stood looking around me for a moment at the skirt of a pretty village, I observed a very agreeable shady lane branching off from the main road. It happened that a man, dressed like a pauper, came up at the moment, so I asked him where the lane led to?

"That be the way to the union, sir," said the man.

"What?" said I, "do you mean to say that nice, pleasant road leads only to the workhouse? I have not seen a road that takes my fancy so much for many a day."

"Well, sir," said he, "it be a nice, pleasantish road, as you say, sure enough, but that's where it do lead to."

To one of my habit of thinking, this reply was a text from which I could not help preaching to myself for some time after. Depend upon it, when we see a pleasant road on the skirt of a village, or a pleasant path of any kind before us in passing through life, there is no harm done in asking the question, Where does it lead to?

Had hundreds adopted this course, instead of pursuing a more thoughtless one, the union workhouse would have had fewer inmates, and hearts which have been bowed down with sorrow, might have leaped for joy. Where does it lead to? is a question likely enough to make a man pause, instead of plunging headlong into evil. Try it, reader, if ever you should find yourself in slippery places, and you will probably have no reason to repent of the experiment.

Drunken Dawes, at one time, was a man well to do, but he took to drinking. A sober-minded friend of his did his best to convince him of his error, but it was to very little purpose. "Nonsense, my good fellow," said Dawes, "you are sermonizing. Two glasses a night can hurt no healthy man."

"Whether such a course will injure a man's health is not the question," replied his friend. "The question is, Where does it lead to?" Dawes, instead of heeding this admonition, went on drinking his two glasses. It was not long before he increased the number, and so by degrees he became a confirmed drunkard. Dawes used to live in the pretty house with the bay window, but he now lives in the union workhouse, so true it is, that "The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty," Prov. xxiii. 21.

Ricketts, though a companion of Dawes, never became a drunkard. There are, however, many roads to ruin, and he

took one of the shortest among them. "Pooh! pooh!" said he to his brother Stephen, who tried to persuade him to relinquish the vice into which he had fallen, "I am only playing for a shilling a game, you can't call that gambling!"

"Whether it is gambling or not," replied Stephen, "it will be well to ask yourself, Where does it lead to?" Ricketts has long since been a ruined man, and if Dawes is not in one workhouse, he is in another.

Potter was a servant at Squire Gordon's, but little attention did he pay to the adage "Honesty is the best policy." "I can wafer it up again, and make all right," said he to his father when he was about to open a letter which his master had intrusted to his care.

"Wafer it up again!" replied his old father, "why, what do you mean? He that will break open a letter, will soon break open a box; and he that will pick a lock, will hardly scruple to pick a pocket. You are entering on a bad course, William; where do you think it will lead to?" Alas! it led him to where his father expected it would; for soon, with a lost place and a lost character, he was a prisoner in the county jail. When he left the prison no one would employ him, and so at last, like many another broken-down man, he was admitted into the union.

Dawes, Ricketts, and Potter, are only three among multitudes who have entered on different pathways to ruin, without troubling their heads with the question Where does it lead to? This course is bad enough in the things of this world, but much worse in those that belong to another: Christian pilgrim, be on your guard.

Temptation has many allurements; sweet are her prospects to the eye, her songs to the ear, her roses to the smell, and her fruits to the taste; but, like the pleasant shady lane leading to the union workhouse, they promise more than they bestow. Enter not thou the path of temptation.

Avoid as dangerous the path of pride, for it leads to destruction. Tread not in the way of deceit, for it will involve you in unknown difficulties. Many have been sadly bemired in the paths of doubt and delay, let it not be your case; and as for the paths of sin, shun them as you would the plague and the pestilence. Green as the grass may grow, and soft as the moss may spring there, the asp, and the adder, and the cockatrice are beneath them.

Keep away from all crooked paths, and have nothing to do with the paths of novelty, but rather "ask for the old

paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls," Jer. vi. 16.

Get as soon as you can into the road of humility, where the herb heartsease so freely grows, and keep your eyes on the cross which stands in the middle of the way of salvation; hardly then can you go wrong. The way of Wisdom, too, is an excellent way; indeed, all "her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace," Prov. iii. 17.

In a word, take the holy Scriptures for your guide, for they, in the darkest seasons, will be a lamp to your feet and a light unto your path. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it," Matt. vii. 13, 14.

Old Humphrey.

PATIENCE IN SUFFERING. A SHORT ACCOUNT OF FANNY B.

OF the early history of Fanny the writer knows but little. Her father died when she was young, leaving her widowed mother with a large family wholly dependent on her for support. Being herself an uneducated woman, she saw no advantage in her children's learning to read, and they grew up without any school instruction.

Fanny was a fine-looking girl, who was vain of her appearance. But when she was about thirteen she was attacked with smallpox, and was sadly disfigured for life with the marks of that disorder. After her recovery she went to service, and, being steady and persevering, she made her way, in the course of a few years, to the position of cook in the family of a respectable banker.

While there, she obtained permission one Sunday evening to take a holiday with two of her fellow-servants. The evening proving very wet, they went for shelter, as well as for a frolic, into a chapel. But that which was designed for pastime, God, by his Spirit, used for profit. She heard the words chosen as a text, "The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there;" and to her it became the place of spiritual birth. For the first time she saw sin as exceedingly sinful, and Jesus as "mighty to save:" and this sight of sinful self, and of the suffering and compassionate Saviour, changed her mind, and she became a new creature. Her first impulse was to find in the Bible what she

had heard from the pulpit. Alas! she had no Bible, and could read very imperfectly. The effort to obtain one subjected her to much ridicule; and when she requested liberty on the next Sunday to go once to chapel, she was peremptorily refused. Finding herself shut out from all means of instruction from others, she employed every leisure moment in instructing herself in reading, in order that she might search the Scriptures. For several months she remained in the same situation, subjected to many annoyances from her fellow-servants for her non-compliance with many of their practices which she now felt to be wrong, and at length she resolved to leave. After a time, she applied for a place in the service of the writer. On inquiring for her character, the reply was, that she had no fault except being very religious; but her master and mistress appeared to think this a very grievous offence. She continued with the writer a twelvemonth, when symptoms of spinal disease appeared, attended with symptoms of other internal ailment. Within three months from the time of leaving service she was a prisoner to her bed; and, with the exception of being occasionally lifted from it, and once changing her room during the early part of her confinement, she continually kept her bed for twenty-one years, and, during the whole of that time, was subject to exquisite bodily suffering. She had skilful medical aid; and one faithful and kind physician, throughout this long period, paid her almost daily visits, and gave his testimony to her unostentatious exhibition of almost unparalleled patience and submission and unwavering faith in Jesus Christ in the midst of pain, at times, such as almost to overpower her reason.

In seasons of comparative ease she taught herself to write, with a view of conveying messages and appeals to her friends at a distance; and God greatly honoured her by making these efforts useful to at least five different individuals, all of whom were in ignorance of God, but who, there is reason to believe, became intelligent Christians. And many who have sat by her bedside received lessons never to be forgotten.

On one occasion the writer observed to her, on her saying she slept little, "Your nights must be very long and dreary." "Oh, no!" she replied, "the Lord Jesus often gives me songs in the night. I sometimes think he waits for the darkest season to surprise me with the brightest light of his countenance; and when I am left without any other helper, he places under me the everlasting arms, that I may know what supports me."

To a little boy who one day went with his mother to carry her some jelly, she said, "You look full of health and joy. I dare say you would think it very sad to lie here day by day without moving." "That I am sure I should. I can't think how you can bear it, you look so shocking. I should not like to come and see you without mamma. Don't you want to get better?" "Oh, no!" she replied. "It would be a disappointment unless I could serve God better in health."

To another person who saw her in great suffering, she said, "This agony bears no comparison to the peace of mind God gives me with it. Nothing can be compared with the happiness of his friendship. One single smile from him seems enough to spread over a whole life of suffering, and make it bright. But" she continued, "I do not always see the light, although I might do so if I did not let the clouds hide it from me."

To some one who came into the room at this time, she said, "Only think, if the light of God's countenance can so cheer the darkness, how it will consume, like fire, the impenitent sinner! Oh that I could persuade every one to come to Jesus without delay. They will never find anything in the world like the peace of a forgiven spirit."

This was the last interview the writer enjoyed with this suffering saint. She lived some time longer without hope of recovery, without the possibility of permanent relief, patiently enduring, and constantly witnessing to the sustaining power of the Christian faith and hope.

Reader, are you in any way afflicted? Then apply to this God of consolation. Are you in health? Seek out the sufferers, and minister to them of what you possess. Remember, too, that the hour of sadness and sickness may come upon you: prepare for it by diligently using the day of health to find the Saviour as your Saviour, by believing in, trusting, loving, and obeying him.

May God grant that this little memorial of one of his hidden ones may cause his name to be honoured, in awakening, strengthening, and encouraging many souls to rest on him. He is faithful to those who trust in him. He is found of all who seek him. And none have ever been disappointed who, by his grace, have believed his promises in Christ Jesus.

S. S.

THE PESTILENCE.

THE numerous deaths already made by this still-continuing disease may well cause the hearts of many to tremble at its

approach. It is well and right that the authorities and inhabitants of many towns in the kingdom bestir themselves, and adopt precautionary measures to prevent or mitigate the evils apprehended from this visitation. We are told in Prov. xxii. 3, that "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself." It is our duty to use all the means in our power for averting or avoiding any approaching calamity; but when we have done our utmost, we must remember that "safety is of the Lord." He it is who smites, and He alone can heal.

With respect to the cholera, all must acknowledge that our best efforts to arrest or cure the dreadful malady are often ineffectual. In spite of medical science, and the most prompt and active measures, it carries off considerable numbers, and in its progress through the land often compels men to say, like Pharaoh's magicians of old, "This is the finger of God." Though much has been said and written as to the causes and nature of the disease, as well as of the remedies to be applied, still in its obscure origin it is emphatically "the pestilence that walketh in darkness," reminding us that "There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord." "None can stay his hand, nor say unto him, What doest thou?" Prov. xxi. 30; Dan. iv. 35.

The presence of such a malady is of itself a serious warning to every one, and as no individual can tell that he may not be one of its victims, it behoves every one of us seriously to set about the work of preparation. There is no time to be lost. Let us each ask, "Am I ready?" Remember, it is a disease which in most cases allows neither time nor opportunity for reflection, when once it seizes upon its victim. The great work of salvation must be done before, or it will, in most instances, be left undone for ever. Now, if we, any of us, feel that we could not meet death with a well-grounded hope of a happy eternity, let us lose not a moment in seeking to find our peace with God. Let us flee for refuge to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Sinner's Friend, the "Rock of Ages," "the Way," the Truth, and the Life." The only foundation of hope, the "Anchor of the Soul." With deep repentance and lively faith let us look unto Jesus, and cry "Lord save us, we perish;" for if we thus look, we know that we shall not be "cast out." Then, and then only, shall we be prepared to meet the cholera with calmness, and a full trust in the overruling providence of God; feeling the sweet assurance that he is our Father, who hath reconciled us to himself by Christ

Jesus, and that he will then never "leave us nor forsake us." We shall then fear nothing. We shall neither be afraid for the "terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday." We shall cast all our care on God, knowing that he "careth for us," and that "all things shall work together for our good."

To you who have already attained this sweet assurance, we would say, neglect not to trim your lamps, for you may be suddenly called to meet the Bridegroom. Let each of us set our own house in order, and act as if we knew that our names would ere long appear in the list of cholera deaths. One thing we do certainly know, namely, that the time is fast approaching when some disease, or accident, or decay, shall be commissioned by our Creator to close our day of grace, and take us to our great account. Oh! may we meet that awful hour with a full trust in the atoning merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, and a firm hope of receiving from him a crown of glory.

A. B.

JUDGE NOT.

O MAN! judge not thy brother. Though there come
 Dark rumours wafted on each wind that blows;
 Though to defend his very friends are dumb,
 Add not thy weight of influence to his foes.
 The whisp'rer of a slander *must* be wrong;
 The subject *may* be—'tis not thine to scan:
 But surely none who owes account to God
 Should take it harshly of his fellow-man.

Judge not thy brother. Though the case be clear,
 Though thine own eyes have seen, thine own ears heard,
 Though of the facts thy reason is convinced,
 Yet speak not lightly one condemning word.
 Till thou canst dive into the heart's deep cells,
 Track the dark paths by each lone spirit trod,
 And trace each blending motive to its source,
 Judge not thy brother; leave him to his God.

What though he be the lowest of the base,
 Or she, thy sister, vilest of the vile,
 Cast out as evil, loathed and spurned aside,
 Speaks there no mercy in thine heart the while?
 Thou knowest not what varying forms of ill,
 Grief, want, temptation, may have framed their lot;
 Pause then, and till thou canst weigh these aright,
 Pity thy fellows, help, but judge them not.

It may be that around that brow in youth
 No father's blessings, mother's prayers were shed;
 It may be that all foul and evil words
 Were ever ringing in his ears instead.
 Pressed by temptation, evil counsels round,
 Without one voice of God or heaven to tell,
 Helpless and hopeless, sickened with despair,
 Is it much marvel that a sinner fell?

Or if not such his lot, not thus his crime,
 It may be that before the Judge Divine
 Full many pleas of palliation lie
 That make his darkest errors light to thine.
 Our souls are framed diversely; there be some
 Whom God hath posted in the battle's van
 More fierce their bosom-foes, more marked their falls:
 Thou art at ease, judge not thy fellow-man.

Is it a Christian that hath done thee wrong?
 And wilt thou judge one whom his God forgives?
 O man! bethink thee how beyond yon sky,
 Pleading for such as he, thy Saviour lives,
 Covering the sin of which he bore the pain.
 It is the special work of Hell's dark king,
 Th' accuser of the saints, to weigh their crimes
 And tell them o'er;—which art thou following?

If thou art Christ's, thou know'st the bitter strife
 Of the new nature with the carnal will;
 Oft hast thou fallen, oft disgraced thy Lord,
 Yet he restored thee and upholds thee still.
 Thyself a pensioner at Mercy's gate,
 Standing in grace vouchsafed thee from above.
 Surely no word should ever pass thy lips
 Of others' errors, save in pitying love.

Then strive and pray, that all these idle thoughts,
 This worse than idle talk of other's deeds,
 May cease, absorbed in a still growing sense
 Of thine own failings, thine own soul's deep needs.
 To learn these, and to win from grace their cure
 Is work enough for one life's fleeting span;
 Walk with thy God, humble, because forgiven,
 And, oh! judge not thine erring fellow man.

A. U.



THE NARROW ESCAPE.

BY OLD HUMPHREY.

How oft from foes and dangers fierce and fell
A heavenly hand preserves us, none can tell.

I WAS busy with my pencil in a country lane one Monday morning, carefully copying the singular and curious marks, the work of insects on a tree; and while thus employed, a gray-headed man, whom I had seen and spoken with at public worship the day before, rode up to me and began to talk about the weather.

No sooner did he understand what I was about, and get a glance at my drawing, than he made the remark that he should set a high value on so curious a production. I at once told him that he was heartily welcome to the paper. He seemed vastly pleased, and this pleased me. What a pity it is when we can so easily give pleasure to others that we do not more frequently avail ourselves of the opportunity!

As we conversed together, the church spire of the town of Newark was visible at a distance of about eight miles, so among other things we talked of the town.

OCTOBER, 1854.

K

"You are often at Newark I suppose?" said I.

"Not so often, sir, as I used to be," replied he, "I must have been there hundreds of times in my day. I once had a narrow escape in coming from the place."

"In what way?"

"I will tell you how it was, sir," said he, setting himself in an easy attitude on his horse, and at once beginning his story. "Time back I used to be in the wool way with my brother. Corn was high, trade was good, and people parted freely with their money. It is no easy thing, now, to scrape a little money together, but, thank God, I made hay when the sun shone, and have all the benefit of it now."

"But as I was saying, sir, I did something in the wool trade, and of course now and then carried money about me, more or less as the case might be. One evening a friend had agreed to ride home with me from Newark, but as he did not come I set off by myself. We little know what is in store for us. True it is, 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.'"

"Not many miles had I proceeded, before I was attacked by three footpads, who demanded my money. 'Let us kill him,' said one. 'No,' said another, 'don't hurt the man if he gives us his purse.' 'I say kill him,' again repeated the one who had threatened me."

"I have often wondered, sir, since then, that I was not more frightened at these ruffians than I was, for I felt almost as calm and collected as I do now. Good thoughts came into my mind; I lifted up my heart to God, and I was satisfied that he would take care of me."

"I hope you will not hurt me," said I, "for there is no need. Only give me time to unbutton my great coat, and you shall have my purse." Again there was a talk of killing me, though two of them said 'No.'

"I had at the time, sir, as far as I can remember, about seventy-three pounds in the lining, at the back of my waistcoat, and a sovereign and a little silver in my purse. I thought it hardly likely that they would search the back of my waistcoat, and I cared little for the sovereign and silver. Unbuttoning my coat I gave them my purse, but they did not seem half satisfied. For a time I knew not how the affair would end, but at last, though they once more threatened me, they let me go."

"For a time I thought by their manner that they would follow me, but they did not, and you may be sure, sir, that I made the best of my way home."

"You did not forget to thank God for your narrow escape, I hope," said I.

"Indeed I did not, sir, for if ever I thanked him in my life with a full heart it was then."

"Well," said I, jocosely, "when I play the robber and meet you in a shady lane, I shall be sure to search the lining at the back of your waistcoat."

"Do, sir," replied he; "but if I never lose my money till you take it I shall be lucky."

As soon as my gray-headed companion had left me, I took another drawing of the singular marks on the tree to replace the one I had given away, and then, as I walked onward, mused not only on the narrative I had heard, but also on the many narrow escapes which had occurred in my own life. My memory supplied me with no less than a dozen instances of extreme danger in which I had been mercifully delivered. "Surely," said I, "these are enough to fill my heart with thankfulness, and to occupy my tongue with hallelujahs."

But think not, reader, that I mean to dwell on myself, and to pass you by. On the contrary, my object is to aim my remarks at your heart. Have you no remembrance of dangers through which you have passed? Have you no deliverances to recall? Jacob set up a pillar in Bethel, and Samuel his Ebenezer between Mizpeh and Shen. Moses commanded stones to be set up in Mount Ebal, and Joshua in the midst of Jordan; where then is your record for narrow escapes? your memorial for your by-gone mercies?

Among the sins of the children of Israel that moved God to wrath against them was this, that they "forgot his works," that they "forgot God their Saviour." Say, then, are you remembering the works of the Lord? Are you magnifying the God of your salvation? If we have both erred in this respect, let us both try to amend our errors. Let us call to mind the days which are passed, and the dangers and deliverances that have chequered our earthly pilgrimage. "'To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him," Dan. ix. 9. Together let us magnify his name.

To Him our highest, noblest powers belong;
To Him, then, let us raise a louder song.

THE BLANK BIBLE.

In a remarkably interesting book, recently published, against some of the forms of scepticism now prevalent, there is an

amusing chapter entitled the "Blank Bible." It is in the form of a dream.

The author says that, in his dream, he one morning took down his Greek Testament, to read a chapter in it, as he was wont, when, to his surprise, he found nothing but a volume of blank paper. The print was all gone. Supposing that some book like it had by accident got into its place, he took down a large quarto volume, which contained both the Old and New Testaments; that, too, was a blank from beginning to end. He then reached down his Hebrew Bible, and, to his increased surprise, and with even something like terror, he found that also blank. As he was musing on these strange events, his servant appeared, saying that there had been thieves in the house during the night, for that her large Bible, which she had left on the kitchen table, had been removed, and another volume of just the same size left in its place, filled with nothing but white paper. Going out into the street he met a friend, who, almost before they had had time to exchange greetings, told him that a most unaccountable robbery had been committed at his house during the night, for that every copy of the Bible had been removed, and a volume of exactly the same size, but of pure white paper, had been left in its stead. Proceeding further, he found every one complaining of a similar loss. "It became evident that, in one night, silently, but effectually, that hand which had written its terrible menace on the walls of Belshazzar's palace, had reversed the miracle, had sponged out of our Bibles every syllable they contained, and thus reclaimed the most precious gift which Heaven had bestowed and ungrateful man had abused."

The effects of this disaster on different classes of mankind were very curious. One keen speculator hastened to the depôt of the Bible Society, and similar places, to buy up their stocks of Bibles, with a view of turning the matter to a profitable account, but was informed that there was not one remaining. People who had never looked into their Bibles for years were not the least loud in their expressions of sorrow. One old gentleman, who had never troubled the book all his life, thought it very hard to be deprived of his religion in his old age. Another, whose moral character had been by no means spotless, expressed strong fears for the results on the morality of mankind. It was sincerely regretted by many pious Christians, who felt that their best heritage was gone, and whose only solace was that they retained much of its precious truths in their memories.

But very soon people taxed their ingenuity to restore what was lost, and one way in which they thought this might be done was, by searching those books in which quotations from it were likely to be found. It was a vain hope, for every such quotation, and everything which had been in any shape borrowed from the Bible, was gone. "Never before," said he, "had I had any adequate idea of the extent to which the Bible had moulded the intellectual and moral life of the last eighteen centuries, nor how intimately it had interfused itself with habits of thought and modes of expression; nor how naturally and extensively its comprehensive imagery and language had been introduced into human writings, and most of all where there had been most of genius. A vast portion of literature became instantly worthless, and was transformed into so much waste paper. It was almost impossible to look into any book of merit, and read ten pages together, without coming to some provoking erasures and mutilations which made whole pages perfectly unintelligible. Many of the sweetest passages of Shakspeare were converted into unmeaning nonsense, from the absence of those words which his own all but divine genius had appropriated from a still diviner source. As to Milton, he was nearly ruined, as might naturally be supposed. Walter Scott's novels were filled with perpetual gaps. I hoped it might be otherwise with the philosophers, and so it was; but even here it was curious to see what strange ravages the visitation had wrought. Some of the most beautiful of Bacon's aphorisms were reduced to perfect nonsense." In process of time, however, the loss was supplied from the memories of mankind. One remembered one part, and another another; grave assemblies were gathered to decide on the text, and by and by the Bible was again complete.

Let us, however, extend the supposition and imagine the loss irreparable; that the truths of revelation had vanished, not only from the printed page, but also from the memories of men, and that there remained nothing more than the regretful remembrance that such a book had once existed. What, in that case, would be the probable consequences to the world? This is scarcely a useless inquiry, for there are men who are doing their utmost to shake the authority of the Bible, and even to ignore its very existence. The subject is a vast one—ample enough for volumes. All we can do, therefore, is just to glance at two or three aspects of it.

It is worth while to consider the probable influence of such a loss on literature and art.

One of the most precious things in the world is a good book, filled with noble and exalted thoughts. "A good book," says John Milton, "is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life." And more than that might be said of the Bible. Regarded as a human composition, it is the work of many authors, and they the greatest and best of mankind. It is more; it is the work of the Spirit of God, and it is worthy of its origin. Its historical portions throw light on periods of which we have no record besides. Its didactic parts are replete with a wisdom which has no parallel. It contains the loftiest thoughts, and it clothes those thoughts in language which has been regarded by all competent critics as a model of pure and elevated style. Nothing can surpass the beauty and the life-like character of its biographies. Where, in all the world, at once to take the greatest and the best, is there a character which can bear comparison for a moment with that of Jesus of Nazareth? And the superiority of the imagery of the Bible is acknowledged, as we have seen, by the appropriation of it, sometimes unconsciously enough, by the greatest poets the world has ever known. Suppose the Bible gone, then, and with it all that it had ever suggested, what a blank would be left in the literary treasures of the world, and what an influence would be withdrawn from literature for the future ages of the world's history!

And there can be no question that its influence on art, which is true poetry—the expression by the pencil and the chisel of the poetic conceptions of the artist's mind—would be most debasing. The finest themes of the historic painter have been selected from the Bible. The best productions of the great masters were suggested by the Scriptures. The finest music, as, for instance, the works of Handel, Haydn, Mozart, and Mendelssohn, has derived its inspiration from the same mighty source. Taking this comparatively low ground, it would be an incalculable misfortune if the Bible were lost.

Still keeping to inferior considerations, we might speak of the influence of the Bible on civil liberty. We prize, and justly, our civil liberties. Cowper truly says—

"Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume,
And we are weeds without it."

But whatever freedom we enjoy may be traced, in no slight

degree, to the influence of the Bible. The history of the world testifies that the greater part of its governments have been more or less despotic. Even in Greece and Rome the freedom was only comparative, and was never established on any permanent basis, or on any comprehensive and intelligent recognition of the rights of man. The strongholds of tyranny now are just the places where either idolatry prevails, or where a corrupt Christianity seals up from the people the word of God.

Tyrants know well that the Bible is the most deadly foe of despotism, and they therefore endeavour to keep it back from their people. And it is very easy to show how it is, that whilst it is the great purpose of the Bible to confer the highest liberty, it scatters far and wide the blessings of civil freedom. It affirms that in the sight of God all men are equal. It teaches that men have rights as men which no one has any business to violate. It defines the duties both of rulers and subjects. It sets up a law, which, if carried out, must destroy all oppression and wrong: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye also even so to them." And it receives men on one common footing, irrespectively of all social distinctions, to the enjoyment of its salvation. Wherever the Bible has been most read there has been most of the spirit of true freedom, and the noblest champions of liberty have been the men who have loved the Bible. They were Christians who accomplished the abolition of slavery in our West Indian colonies, and they are Christians who are still the most devoted friends of the slave. Robert Nicol, a Scottish poet of great promise, who died at an early age a few years ago, acknowledged the influence of the Scriptures on liberty in a beautiful poem, entitled "The Ila' Bible." Addressing the Bible, he says—

"Thou art a gift a God of love might give,
For love, and hope, and joy
In thy Almighty-written pages live;
The slave who reads shall never crouch again;
For, mind-inspired by thee, he bursts his feeble chain.

"And, Father, thou hast spread
Before men's eyes this charter of the free;
That all thy book might read,
And justice love, and truth, and liberty.
The gift was unto men—the giver God:
Turn, slave! it stamps thee man; go, spurn thy weary load."

There is every reason to fear that all this would be reversed if the Bible were withdrawn. The influence of those

sentiments which it has fostered might continue for a time ; but gradually, though surely, their power would become lessened, and amidst the debasement of our populations, and the anarchies that would ensue, it is at least probable that liberty would depart, and that fetters, which now seem to be dissolving, would be fast and firmly rivetted.

We could dwell with interest and delight on the social influence of the Bible, on its elevating influence on communities and states, on the sanctity which it throws over the sweet endearments of home, and on what it has done for woman ; and we could easily show how all this would be reversed if the Bible were gone. We pass on, however, to notice briefly its influence on morality.

The Bible lifts up the true standard of right, and it requires that men conform to it, not because to do so is beautiful, or expedient, or useful, but because it is the will of God. There is no morality like that of the Bible, and there is none so influential. It inculcates, by the highest possible motives, " whatsoever things are true, and honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report." There is not a virtue which it does not foster, and there is not a vice which it does not condemn. He who desires to know what the world would be without the Bible, needs only to read the apostle's description of what it was, as he has portrayed it in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. We might point to the state of things in France during the revolution, when the sanctuaries were closed and the ministers of religion banished ; and we might also point to the most prominent forms of infidelity which are existing now, whose chief attraction to their misguided votaries is, that they leave them at liberty to indulge in unbridled sensuality. Take away the Bible, and the flood-gates of vice would be uplifted, and the stream of corruption would soon sweep away everything which is truly good and beautiful ; and ere long the earth, like the world before the flood, would be ripe for some terrible judgment which should proclaim God's deep abhorrence of the iniquity of mankind, and declare that they should no longer live.

And the bearing of such a loss on man's highest interests may be conjectured.

To be truly happy we must know, and love, and serve God ; but it has always been the tendency of the human heart to forget him ; and the idea, once lost, man has never been able to recover it. By no effort of unassisted thought

have men attained to clear and correct conceptions of His infinite excellence. The Bible is the only book in which God has fully revealed himself, and that lost he must be inevitably forgotten. Nowhere else is there made known the way of return to his lost favour, and no where else are there any authentic discoveries of the world to come. It is only as men know God, and are conscious of the enjoyment of his favour through Christ, and only as they thus have a well-defined hope for eternity, that they can have true peace; but faith in God and in Jesus Christ, and a good hope through grace of final salvation, have sustained the most downcast and afflicted, and made the scenes of the deepest trial scenes of most abounding happiness. Take away the Bible, and you take away at once the comfort of the sorrowing, the guide of the perplexed, and the hope of the guilty. It were far better to blot out the sun from the firmament than to remove from our benighted world the light of heavenly truth.

But it cannot be: however we may have deserved that the gift should be withdrawn, it yet remains. The writer above quoted awoke from his dream, and found the morning sun was shining in quiet radiance on the open Bible, which lay on his table. "So strongly," says he, "had my dream impressed me, that I almost felt as though, on inspection, I should find the sacred leaves a blank; and it was with joy that my eyes rested on those words, which I read through grateful tears, 'The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.'"

It may be, reader, that your Bible has been, for all practical purposes, very nearly, if not altogether, a blank Bible to you. If so, deplore your neglect of so precious a boon, and resolve, by the help of God and the Spirit, to study it daily with thought and prayer; then, as he may give you ability and opportunity, defend it against the attacks of those who would deprive the world of its light; and do your utmost to disseminate its pages through the length and breadth of the earth.

S. G.

MY WIFE DID IT.

MR. HANDLEY was, according to his custom, riding about his Irish estate in order to see how his tenantry were getting on, and to serve them in any way that might be in his power, for he greatly desired their welfare, both temporal and

spiritual. The morning was bright, the air fresh and balmy, and the birds sang merrily in the hedges, which were gay with the blossoms of the golden furze, the delicate wild rose, and sweet honeysuckle. Everything seemed cheerful, and the feelings of Mr. Handley's benevolent mind were in accordance with the scene. "What a pity it is," he thought, "that so fair a world should be disfigured by sin!" and just as he did so a circumstance occurred giving melancholy proof that such was the fact.

He was passing the dwelling of a small farmer, who rented a few acres of land from him. This cottage, and everything about it, wore the appearance of neglect and poverty. The door was shut, but just as the landlord rode by, it opened suddenly, and a man rushed out with both his hands up to his head as if to defend it from the expected blow of a woman who was pursuing him, evidently under the influence of violent passion. On seeing Mr. Handley she instantly turned back into the house, closing the door after her, while the man advanced slowly, looking very much ashamed.

"Good morning to you, John Casey," said the gentleman, "tell me what is all this about?"

"'Twas my wife did it, sir," answered John, with his eyes cast down.

"Your wife seemed very angry indeed; but did not you do anything to provoke her?" There was no reply, and Mr. Handley continued, "Ah! John, notwithstanding the promise which you made me you have been at the public-house, and this shameful quarrelling with your wife is one of the many sad consequences of that ruinous habit. Do you forget that the Bible says of married people, 'They two shall be one flesh?'"*

"One!" exclaimed Casey; "if you passed this way sometimes, sir, you would say there were forty of us;" and he gave a deep sigh.

"Well! I am sincerely sorry for it," Mr. Handley replied, "and we must talk more about it. Meanwhile, go to your business, and do not put the whole blame of what I now saw upon your wife."

Casey, touching his hat respectfully, went to his fields, and Mr. Handley alighting, fastened his horse in a shed, and entered the cottage. Mrs. Casey was much confused at seeing him, but he seated himself quietly upon a chair which she settled for him, after dusting it hastily with her apron,

* Eph. v. 31.

and said, "It grieves me to find that John has not given up his bad habits. I am afraid he often tries your temper, my poor woman."

The kindness of his manner was unexpected; she had looked for the rebuke which her conscience told her she deserved, and was ready to meet it with an attempt at vindicating herself; but now she softened at once, and burst into tears. "He does try me sorely, sir," she said, as soon as sobs would allow her to speak, "everything is going to ruin, and —"

Mr. Handley interrupted her. "Do not distress yourself, Mrs. Casey, by going over the evils of drunkenness,—the worst of all being, it is declared in Scripture, that drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God,* but tell me, have you tried any way of making him give it up?"

"Every way that a woman could try, sir," she answered, and enumerated the various efforts which she had made; how she had locked up the money, lectured him, coaxed him, followed him to the public-house and shamed him before all the people there.

"Yes, and I think you had some idea of trying the effect of striking him when I came just now," said Mr. Handley. The woman coloured deeply, and hung down her head, but the gentleman continued, in the same mild tone, "I am afraid, my friend, that you have not yet found out the right method of trying to reform your husband. The ways you have used we could hardly expect a blessing on, for they are quite contrary to what God has desired you to do."

"How so, sir?"

He drew a small Testament from his pocket, and opening it, said, "This is what God commands you, by his apostle Paul, Mrs. Casey; 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands.'† Then Peter writes thus, 'Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.'‡"

"Well! sir," she inquired, with an anxious look, "and what would you advise me to do? If the way I tried to cure poor Jack of his fault is a bad one, may be your honour could tell me a better."

"Did you ever try to pray for him?" asked Mr. Handley.

"Oh, sir! I have plenty of sins of my own to pray for."

"No doubt, 'All have sinned, and come short of the glory

* 1 Cor. vi. 10.

† Eph. v. 22.

‡ 1 Peter iii. 1.

of God,* but surely you have heard that glorious truth, that 'the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'† You may then, by the Holy Spirit's help, ask freely for forgiveness both for yourself and husband, remembering that without it you must perish for ever." A silence followed, and Mrs. Casey looked as if much impressed by these words.

Mr. Handley then said, "You asked what I would advise you to do to cure Jack of his fault. I have thought of a plan which, if you follow it, I trust will be successful. Take this little book and keep it in your pocket; read a portion of it regularly every morning; let nothing prevent you: then whenever, during the course of the day, you have a few moments to spare, look at two or three verses, particularly those which I am now marking with my pencil. You must also make a resolution never to open your lips to your husband when he comes home, whatever he has been doing, till you have first prayed to God to forgive you both all your sins for his Son's sake, and to give you new hearts. Then, when you do speak to John, try and do it as much as possible according to the advice you will find in this book. Promise me all this, and I have every hope that, with the blessing of God, you will soon be a happier couple than you now are." The kind interest which the gentleman evidently took in her welfare was a strong recommendation of his prescription. She accepted the Testament thankfully, made the promise, and he left her.

Soon after this visit unexpected business called Mr. Handley on the continent, and nearly three years elapsed before he was able to return home. He had not long arrived when he went, according to his old custom, to see his poor tenants. On arriving at Casey's farm he was surprised and gratified by observing that both house and land presented a striking contrast to what they had done when he left them. The owner, who was thatching a stack of corn, ran with joy to meet him, and took him to the cottage, where Mrs. Casey received him with a cordial welcome. Here also there was in everything a change for the better. The woman and her children were clean and tidy; so was their little stock of furniture, and every face wore a healthy, happy expression.

The landlord was not long seated when he said, "There is a change here, Casey, which it gives me great pleasure to perceive. Fences mended, fields in order, with some sheep

* Rom. iii. 23.

† 1 John i. 7.

and even cows grazing on them. Then the cottage so neat and comfortable, and you all looking so well. What has done all this?"

"My wife, sir," cried the farmer, "it was my wife did it."

"She has accomplished more than many women could in the time," replied Mr. Handley, smiling and pointing through the window to the well-filled farmyard.

"Oh, sir! I did not mean with her own hands. Still it is true that my wife did it."

"Well, tell me how?" said the gentleman.

"I will, sir, though it is to my own shame. You know well, sir, how I was ruining myself and my family by my love for whisky. The last time your honour was here you saw something of how matters were. Well, sir, I felt so much ashamed that I thought to give up drinking entirely, and staid a good while longer than usual away from the public-house; but I went there at last. It was late at night when I came home—angry with myself, and angry with my wife for all I expected her to say to me; so, to have the first word, I said, when I saw her sitting by the fire, 'What makes you there watching for me? couldn't you go to bed?' Oh, how surprised I was, sir, when instead of getting into a passion and abusing me, she only answered quietly, 'Oh, 'twas no hardship for me to sit up a little to-night, John, for I wanted to mend your stockings and have them comfortable for you in the morning.' This went to my heart more than any hard thing she ever said to me. I wished, above all things, that she would begin to scold, for somehow that would have relieved my conscience, but she did not. However, sir, I went again, and at my return she met me in the very same way. And again, and again, and still she met me so, only more loving and gentle every time, and I more and more uneasy in mind. At last I resolved that by staying out very late, and drinking a great deal, I would provoke her so that she would surely scold me, when I would answer her, so that we might quarrel, and then my conscience would not torment me so terribly about the bad way that I was going on. Well, sir, it was four o'clock in the morning when I came back this time. The wind was blowing, and the cold rain was falling, when I knocked at the door. She opened it at once, with a candle in her hand, and the smile on her face just as usual. 'Come in, come in, Jack,' says she, 'I have a snug fire for you. Let me help you off with your wet coat, now take off your shoes and warm your feet; and see, I have a hot cup of

coffee ready for you.' I burst out crying and sobbing like a child. I was in no way to speak that night, so I went to bed ; and when I woke in the morning I told my wife that I never again would taste any strong drink, and I hope I never shall. I asked her how it was that she had such patience with me, and what it was that put it into her head to try such a way of dealing with me. Then, sir, she told me all you had said to her, and that it was from the Testament you gave her she had learned how wives ought to behave, and that if we are Christians we must be kind to one another, and forgiving.* We have read the Bible together every evening since, sir, and though I am very ignorant, I trust I shall learn much good from it yet. Our business has gone on well since, sir, for instead of spending my time and money at the public-house I attend to it. So now, sir, when you asked what made such a change here, you will allow that I was right enough when I said my wife did it."

"No," interrupted Mrs. Casey, "it was God did it—the praise be to him."

"Certainly," replied Mr. Handley. "From him comes every good thing ; and truly is it written, 'Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord ; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?'+ May we, my friends, be enabled to say from the heart, 'I will never forget thy precepts ; for with them thou hast quickened me.'"+

E. F. G.

THE ARMY AT HOME.

It was in the month of March, 1854, that two brothers walked thoughtfully away from the pier-head of one of the great seaports of Britain, to which a novel and exciting scene had drawn them from the desk and counting-house. The first embarkation from that port of a large detachment of troops for active service in the east, had just been effected. Large numbers from the district round had poured into the town, until every available spot was thronged with gazers, anxiously awaiting the moment when the troops should begin to embark.

Great as seemed the enthusiasm and the excitement of the scene, the brothers' thoughts were not chiefly occupied with the glittering show ; but they were contemplating the hearts and the souls of those who were moving forward at the word of command, to stand, if need be, to be mown down before an

* Eph. iv. 32.

† Jer. xxiii. 29.

‡ Psa. cxix. 93.

enemy's fire, but who were now struggling with home affections, and instinct with spirit and immortality.

For one moment the brothers had pressed forward to catch the out-stretched hand of a near relation who walked beside his men. One eager, hasty pressure of that hand, one half-averted look, and he was gone—their father's youngest born. Then they turned and struggled out of the confusion as best they might.

"Many a young fellow will be excited to enlist to-day," remarked one, suddenly breaking a long silence.

"I would that we were all soldiers," replied his brother; "while those gallant men are abroad, we must re-organize our defences at home."

"The militia will do service if need arise," said the younger.

"The militia will not do the work that needs doing, my good brother," said Mr. H—, "we want men who are always soldiers, not merely on occasional seasons of display, but always ready for action, never too weary to watch, never too lazy to fight, never too covetous to be faithful. I wonder how many of those brave looking fellows just gone will desert."

"Desert! surely not one," exclaimed Henry H—.

"Then they shame us at home in every point of view. They are worthy our imitation, Henry. They have given up everything to serve their queen and country, and before they draw a sword upon the foe, a pang has rent their own hearts with a wound which, in many a case, time will never heal, and only eternity disclose."

"You take the melancholy view of it, William. Ought we not to weigh both sides of the question?"

"I am looking at the real one, Henry. They are many of them suffering keenly now, and in a few months bodily torture may be added to mental anxiety, yet they do not flinch. They will die beneath their colours; their personal pride and ambition are twined round their country's standard. I honour them, and it seems to me that while they are doing their best abroad, we have no right to be sitting at ease at home, in all the softnesses and indulgences of peace, doing our pleasure, eating, drinking, and making merry. Why should not we form an army at home, exercise and drill, and make as many recruits as we can find? Those men are learning now what it may cost to wear the queen's uniform. It is no longer make-believe and show. Let us no more be make-believe Christians. Let us prove ourselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ."

William H— was no make-believe Christian in the eyes of his brother, but he had been looking within and around, and drawing comparisons, and he was abashed at the cold, dull, inoperative condition of the professing followers of the Captain of salvation, amidst a world of wickedness and unbelief, whilst the aggression of a tyrant, or an insult to the national honour, could kindle the enthusiasm of an empire, and make every man feel the cause his own.

“Where are the armies of the Lord of hosts?” said he, uttering his thoughts aloud. “If we had all been at our posts, possibly the scourge of war had not called our countrymen from ploughshare and pruning-hook, from civilized life and national progress, and the peaceful enjoyment of domestic blessings. Where are our ensigns, glorying in their colours? Where are our soldiers, loving and proclaiming in every ear our heavenly Sovereign’s name? Where are the lambs in meekness, the lions in boldness, the doves in harmlessness, the serpents in wisdom, that constituted the early muster-roll of the church of Christ?”

“There are many yet,” said Henry; “it is easy to point out such men at the present time.”

“It is easy, because they are so few,—they are the bright exceptions to the dark rule. And they are likely to remain few, unless a mighty change is granted; and their numbers are lessening. Death is making gaps, and not many come to fill them up. There are a few missionaries; but as they sink beneath their labours, who rushes to the vacant post? When new aggressions on Satan’s strongholds are planned, where are the crowd of volunteers to head the forlorn hope? One here on a Patagonian shore, one there on a Tahitian isle, one on the Niger’s pestilent bank, one in a city mission. They are God’s own heroes; but they fall. We admire their zeal and self-denial, but imitation comes not within our thoughts; nay, perhaps we secretly congratulate ourselves that we are not called to do likewise. Depend on it, Henry, the curse of sentimentalism is on a great deal of the religion now professed. The life and death of the ‘Man of sorrows’ is often read even by his own people as a tale of the past, rather than as an example to every believer to the end of time. It requires patient, prayerful study of that character, close and affectionate contemplation of that model, with spiritual discernment from God himself to apply and appreciate all he did and said as revealed for our learning, before we can in loyal, soldier-like obedience ‘take up our cross, and follow him.’

My impression is, that if Jesus returned to the earth now, he would not own much of that which is called Christianity, and Paul would preach as ardently to our polished heathenism, as ever he may have done to the barbarian aborigines of this island."

"There is undoubtedly a sad state of inconsistency among us. But what is to be done?"

"Let those who feel it begin," said William H—; "you and I do feel it, and lament it, but that is not enough. Let us see to it that we are not of those who present themselves once a week in our Lord's presence, while our six days' offerings are wholly at the shrine of mammon or pleasure, and consisting in the very gifts he has bestowed for his own service and glory."

"You and I can do but little, my dear brother," said Henry. "I prefer to think of the hidden church amidst abounding profession."

"But she should show herself, Henry. Our Lord called her 'a light,' 'a city on a hill.' It is a mistake to suppose that the Christian church should hide herself in indolent seclusion. She is called to glorify her Lord and Head, by adorning his doctrine in broad daylight."

"Well, look at the Christian institutions of the land, surely they speak favourably."

"Ah, yes, in one sense they may; but much of their support is hollow. He who scrutinizes the heart and detects motives, will never accept much of what we suppose to ascend as incense to his glory. Only the true believer's offering of love that ascends in Christ by faith, ever reaches the throne; and while our subscription lists are placarded the world over, and sometimes astonish ourselves, we should hide our heads in the dust for shame and sorrow, could we see how few are the genuine honest mites in the treasury. 'Give me thy heart,' said the Lord,—'give me the secret spring that rules the man, and all the rest will follow; but give not Satan or the world a duplicate key. I will not share that treasure with another. When I sweep and garnish, I will inhabit. I will reign, to the man's peace and joy. I ignore the offerings of his conscience. I want the service of his heart, the promptings of renewed affections.' Without this, the gourd of profession may flourish and overshadow our land, but the root is hollow, the worm inhabits it, and in due time the wind of heaven will prostrate it, and show it for what it was worth."

"Well, William," said Henry, smiling at warmth which he thoroughly respected, though his own convictions were not so vivid; "you know the old proverb, which runs to the effect that one remedy is worth twenty complaints. What do you propose to do towards improvement?"

"I will tell you by and by at home," said William. And in the evening, in the domestic circle, where the events of the day had been discussed, in special reference to the relative in whose position they forcibly realized the solemn fact of the political change which was startling Europe, Mr. H—renewed the subject.

"I have thought long and deeply," said he, "and the first and best thing to be done, is for every true Christian among us to repair to God's armoury, and in realizing faith, and earnest prayer, polish up our rusty harness. We do not sufficiently appreciate the helmet of salvation. We wear our blessing thanklessly,—we go about under its protection in the storms and tempests of life, safe and unharmed, and yet think as lightly of it, excepting, perhaps, on some rare occasion, as if it were indeed a thing made of perishable metal, instead of fashioned and forged on the altar of eternal love in heaven. No wonder then that we are not sufficiently eager to commend it to others. Then our breastplate—'the righteousness of Christ which is on and upon all them that believe.' It is not given to us to wear like a loose extra thought that may or may not prove serviceable, so that we might manage without if we choose; it is our safety, it is our indispensable defence against the death-blow of Almighty justice. Let us clasp it close, and let our hearts beat tranquilly beneath its impenetrable security. Our shields, oh how dingy and world-bespattered!—not bright with blows of quenched 'fiery darts;' the enemy has scarcely deemed us worth an encounter, and has lured us into 'standing at ease,' where our Captain disputed with him every inch of ground, and warned us of incessant conflict. We are allowing the sword he has given us to rust in the scabbard; let us bring it again under the whetstone of faith and love, and again it will cut sharp and keen as in days of yore. The only reason of its seeming inefficiency now is the languid uncertainty with which it is wielded. We want the vigorous, manly arm of apostolic Christianity, the prayerful determination with God's help to make his words felt among the routed hosts of antichrist. More of God's words, and less of man's, will make the telling sermon. Thus armed, we must try to understand more of

what is meant by 'praying always,' not fainting, undergirding our weakness with God's promised strength, delighting in his 'whatsoevers.' 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive,' said the Lord. 'Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.' 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' What marching orders are these! Here is encouragement for self, glory to God, and good to man; here is Christianity in earnest."

"Then, being armed and commissioned, you would have each in our place, seeking, as opportunity offers, the good of others," said Henry. "I have often resolved to be always provided with a little silent pleader in the shape of a tract, or a book of texts, or better still, a pocket Testament to give where it might be unsuitable to converse."

"Then carry out your resolution, brother, it is good; and let each of us do the same: never leaving our home without a prayer that God may direct an arrow shot at a venture, to the benefit of some fellow-sinner. We cannot know where that one may be, whether in field or highway, shop or exchange, work-room or drawing-room, but we may be always ready, in season and out of season, as men count seasons; for eternity is an unchanging season, and all time's seasons are too short for the world to make ready for its advent. We may thus 'obstruct' Satan's 'highway' with proclamations of a Saviour's love, and approach in some degree to the characteristic of the Thessalonian church, in 'sounding out' the word of the Lord."

"There is another important feature in which most of us are miserably deficient, William, and that is the meekness and gentleness of Christ. There is a want of brotherly love among brethren. Christians are often as quick to defend and vindicate themselves, to slander and asperse each other, as any worldling in the land. We must try to cultivate forbearance in love. Oh how easy it is to bear with the little faults and petulances of those we love! Do we then 'love the brethren' in sincerity and truth, when it is more easy to complain and retaliate, than to forbear and forgive?"

"You have touched a stumbling block which many a Christian unintentionally casts in another's way. This and other features of our Master's likeness must be cultivated more prayerfully and zealously. Whatsoever things are pure, and true, and honest, and lovely, and of good report, must

be more thought on. This would 'adorn the doctrine,' it would prove that there is a doctrine of constraining power. Practice is as the graceful arrangement of flowers in a beautiful bouquet. The flowers all grow in the garden, but the bouquet concentrates attention on their varied beauties, mingles their refreshing fragrance, and compels observation to the fact, that not only has the owner taste and judgment to arrange them harmoniously in the 'sweet language of flowers,' but that he has somewhere a well-kept garden where they grow, and if he cannot take you there, he imparts the benefits of his fragrant possessions, by bringing to you a portion of their loveliness and bloom.

"Then we want careful district visitors; true brothers and sisters of mercy among the poor; prayerful Sunday-school teachers; more zealous and devoted pastoral aids. In fact, the fields of usefulness enlarge daily. Let us each then call conscience to preside over suggestions for God's glory and the good of immortal souls. Let love plead the cause of ignorance and vice, and their prolific offspring, misery and crime; and if selfishness arise with a misnamed amendment to its motions, let us crush the hydra with the herculean club of vigorous, determined self-denial. Let us embody our resolutions in the active exercise of all the talents the Master has given us to occupy until he returns to take account of his servants, head and heart, tongue, purse, influence, pen; and if whatsoever we do is done with humility and prayer, our faithful and true God will patronize and sanction it, and provide for its progress, and will reward it with a blessed success.

"Again, let us, we who profess to love Him who died for us, and who say we desire to do all things as unto him,—let us lay it steadily upon our consciences, undeterred by smiles of contempt, or frowns of anger, to *dress*, to *visit*, to *entertain* in the name of Jesus, and we shall find more money to give away, more time redeemed, more true hospitality enjoyed. It is high time for God's people to set an example. They have followed the follies of worldly fashion so long, that we often know not whether we enter a temple of luxury, or the home of a Christian man; whether we meet, beneath the gaudy trappings of capricious fancy, a child of pleasure or a daughter of the Lord Almighty. It ought not so to be; and let us who say so, who feel so, begin to stem this downward current, and release our Christianity from the thralldom of worldly conformity. There is a need; we can show cause for a

change, a combination, a holy alliance for the glory of God, and the safety of our Christianity and nation. So may our gracious queen, whom God preserve, be encompassed by an army at home, invisible indeed as to their local array, but 'strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,' garrisoning a fortress against which God would never suffer a weapon formed to prosper, while faith holds the standard, watchfulness guards its towers, and prayer supplies its magazines."

"So too," said the aged father, "may our faith and love, by God's mercy, be as a shield of safety around our absent ones in the day of battle."

"Whether we or they," said William, "are in very hopeful case without doing any of these things, it were prudent not to wait events that would decide. It is the clear duty of the Christian people of this land, of every land, to be doing more than they have yet dreamed of for Christ's sake, and by every lawful means to augment their forces. What a bounty we can offer to our recruits! forgiveness 'of our debts,' an imperishable robe of righteousness, abundant reward from the first hour of enlisting, and sure promises to cheer, with blessed hope, the hastening future!"

"If we could carry out your suggestions on a worthy scale, we might be able to meet the demand for foreign heathenism," said Henry; "and true soldiers of the cross might be found to battle with the moslem in a new crusade. It would be a sight worth assembling to celebrate, were the flower of our Christian chivalry to embark in gallant numbers for the dark habitations of the earth to preach the gospel of Christ to every creature, and sound the trumpet of deliverance wherever Satan holds a slave. Father, could you spare a son for such a cause as this?"

"I could, my son, and bidding him God speed with my last breath, I could expect to meet him, and the trophies God would give him, before the throne in glory. If every Christian would now begin within, at the root of the matter, see that all is right in his and her own soul, and then hold forth the light that has expelled the darkness there, while the life shines in concert as an epistle written by sovereign grace to illustrate the meaning of salvation,—verily I believe the windows of heaven should be opened and such a blessing showered upon our country, as should astound the potsherds of the earth as they strive and clamour over their abortive schemes for the true welfare of the nation."

T.

THE CRIPPLE OF STRASBOURG.

DURING the long period in which Protestants in other parts of France had to endure great sufferings and privations, Alsace enjoyed the privilege of religious freedom. At the time that province was ceded to France, the rights of conscience were secured to it by law ; and while those professing the reformed faith, in the rest of the kingdom, were obliged to seek "in dens and caves of the earth" for a spot where at the risk of their lives they could meet together to worship God, their brethren in Alsace had handsome churches, where they could assemble together to pray and to hear the word preached, and many instances might be given of fruit springing from the seed thus sown. Wherever the gospel is preached, we find individuals who receive it into a good heart, and bring forth fruit even where a superficial view of the whole community might lead us to think that it had been scattered in vain ; and Strasbourg has not been wanting in eminent servants of God, who both by life and doctrine have glorified him.

The handsome Protestant church of St. Thomas in that town was, however, often visited by strangers, not to hear the word of God, but to admire the stately monument of Marshal Saxe, one of the most renowned warriors of his day, and it was for this purpose that in the latter part of the last century a foreigner of rank and his wife entered it. They were on a tour through continental Europe, and travelled under a feigned name, to avoid the ceremonies which, had their rank been known, would have prevented their seeing much that they wished. The lady was a native of Alsace, and had lived there until her marriage fixed her residence in a distant land, and now after the lapse of a few years, passing through her native province in the course of their tour, she took pleasure in pointing out to her husband everything she thought he would approve and admire. The clergyman of the church accompanied them, attended by a little boy, who carried the keys, unlocked the doors, and seemed ready to make himself useful without obtruding himself on their notice, but falling back modestly as soon as he had rendered his little service.

The gentleman stood for a few moments lost in thought over the tomb of the warrior, and then turning to his wife, said in rather a saddened tone of voice, "This is all that remains of human glory and power ; a great name which may be remembered for a short time, and a few feet of earth. Oh, how far preferable to such glory is domestic happiness

and household love. They make us better here below and happier hereafter." From this observation it seems plain that the speaker was one of those who are in ignorance of what true religion consists of, and where alone true and lasting happiness is to be found. Had he known the gift of God in salvation by Jesus Christ through faith in his atoning sacrifice, he could not have spoken thus. Still the thought of the nothingness of human glory had a softening influence on his mind, which through grace might lead to a desire for a heavenly inheritance.

Offering his arm to his wife, they turned to leave the church. As they were passing a pillar near the entrance, they were struck by a smile of peculiar pleasure on the countenance of the little boy, as he gave an affectionate salute to a poor woman who was sitting at the foot of the column. She held upon her knees a crippled child covered with scanty and patched clothes. The traveller stopped and asked whether the child was her own. He was struck by the poverty of her appearance, and from the expression of the boy's countenance thought that of course this was his mother. The woman was embarrassed, and did not at once answer the question, whether the child was her own. The clergyman repeated the question, perhaps a little impatiently, for the stranger said, "Softly, softly, dear sir, there is no hurry; she will comprehend my foreign accent better in a minute. Is this child yours, my good woman?"

"Oh, yes, sir, it is indeed mine; but it would not be alive now were it not for that little angel standing there behind his reverence." Every eye now turned towards the little boy, who drew back quite ashamed.

"Come, tell me what the boy has done for you. I am sure he has no reason to be ashamed of it from the way you speak. Is he your son?"

"No, sir, no relation of mine whatever, but I love him as much as I do my daughter." And then the poor woman told that she had been left a widow, and in such poverty, that, at least until she could find means to earn her bread, she was obliged to ask alms,* and she could think of no better place to do so than at the church door, where she would meet those, who having joined in the prayers of the congregation and heard God's redeeming mercy proclaimed to them, would surely be disposed to minister to the wants of others. She felt,

* At that time and in that part there was no public provision for the poor by law.

too, more courage to ask assistance in a spot where she had heard from God's own written word, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me."

As she was leaving the church to return home, she found herself entangled amidst some carriages and carts passing near the entrance, and attempting to run to get clear of them, her foot slipped and she fell: her child was thrown forward some paces from her arms. The little girl's leg was broken, and she must have been trampled under the feet of the horses, had not little Hans, who was just coming out of the church, sprung forward and carried her away at the risk of his own life. Since that day he had shared with the child and her mother the fruits of his own labour. The poor little girl had never recovered the effects of the fall, but had gradually become quite a cripple. Hans spent the greater part of his earnings in paying for drugs, which they hoped would strengthen and cure her. He kept for his own use, what barely sufficed to procure the scanty raiment that he wore, and he often went without a dinner to enable him to purchase some delicacy for the poor little sufferer, cheerfully dividing everything with his adopted mother and sister.

The lady, who possessed much amiability of character, was touched by this account of the boy's generous self-denial, and turning to him eagerly asked, "But where are your own father and mother?"

"In heaven, lady," answered the boy.

"And who then gives you anything? How do you get money? Where do you live? Have you a home?" she asked with the same eagerness.

"Simeon the wheelwright gives me 15 sous (7½d.) when he has a day's work for me, and he always allows me to sleep in the shed, which has plenty of straw in it, and is comfortable and warm. This saves my paying for lodging, and so I have the more to give dear little Fanchette. Father and mother always told me that the Lord would provide for those who pray to him to teach them what is right, and who trust in Jesus Christ; and I pray to him to show me how to earn my bread, and he does so."

The lady was so pleased with this poor orphan boy's conduct, that, obeying the impulse of her feelings, she poured the contents of her purse into the woman's lap, saying as she did so, "I am sure that in doing thus I gratify Hans more than if I gave him double this sum for himself. But he shall not be forgotten."

Before they left the town to pursue their journey, the travellers had Hans bound apprentice to the wheelwright with whom he had been working, and they deposited in the hands of the clergyman a sum of money sufficient to establish him in his trade when his apprenticeship should end.

The Christian cannot fail to mark the goodness of God in thus providing for the wants and comforts of the poor crippled girl, and of her self-denying friend Hans, whose devotedness evidently sprang from Christian motives as well as from a tender heart. The Lord's promise will never fail, and the cup of cold water given from love to him shall in no wise lose its reward.

E. M. P.

OPPOSITE SYSTEMS.

THE only child of a widow, a very respectable young man, after much study of the Douay Bible, became convinced of the errors of Popery, and came out truly converted. His mother was in despair, and persuaded two Roman Catholic bishops to go to him. They spent upwards of two hours conversing kindly with him, and using arguments and persuasion to induce him to recant, but in vain; with the sword of the Spirit he fought and conquered. At length, when they found they could not prevail by kindness, one of the bishops, a tall, commanding man, said to the other, "It must be done; yes, I see it must be done;" and rising, with great dignity and solemnity, he took off a signet ring, and pointing it at the young man, he began to pronounce the most fearful curses upon him. He stood meek and unmoved. At length the bishop brought in his widowed mother in his list of curses, saying, with terrible emphasis, "May the curse of a widow's broken heart wring your soul with untold agony." The poor fellow could bear no more, but covering his face with his hands sobbed aloud, and the bishops thought they had accomplished their end. The young man perceived that he had been misunderstood, and uncovering his eyes he arose with great decision, and said, "Gentlemen, you thought to win me back to error by cruelly wringing my heart, but you have failed; I am only more thoroughly convinced that yours cannot be the religion of Jesus. Such curses could not come from lips which had felt the power of his love; but I have been taught of him, and his blessed word is, 'Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.' Oh, sirs, I will ever pray that his choicest blessings may descend on you; and when you come to die,

God grant, for Christ's sake, that the peace of God, which passeth understanding, may be yours for ever and for ever !” They left him, and he is doing all he can to draw men out of Popery, and to win souls to Christ.

Rev. J. C. Miller, of Birmingham.

MISSIONARY ANECDOTE.

A CHINESE CHRISTIAN CHILD.

THE following account is in the language of Mrs. Bridgman, the wife of an American missionary at Shanghae :—

“The mission school has within a few days been bereaved of one of the pupils, who has been under instruction about two years. During the greater part of this period he has been afflicted with a disease of the heart, and at one time his mother took him home, and was unwilling that he should return to the school; but by the persevering efforts of his teachers she yielded to their wishes, and he resumed his place under their instruction. His disease made such progress that study was relinquished, and each day gave sure and certain evidence that the little invalid was fast passing away.

“The name of the little boy was Quachung. He was about eight years old. No pains were spared by his teachers to make him as comfortable as circumstances would allow; but it was the interests of his soul that caused them the greatest solicitude, and they did not conceal from him that his sickness would probably terminate in early death. He beheld his own little frame wasting away from day to day. His sufferings were such that he required the most untiring sympathy. But this little boy was happy, and why? What was the secret of this happiness? Let him solve the problem in his own words: ‘I do not believe in the worship of idols, but I love Jesus; and because he has been so good to me, I am not afraid to die.’

“A few days ago he asked to be baptized. His friends being satisfied that he was a proper subject for that ordinance, we accepted an invitation, and with the members of the mission, assembled in his teacher's private parlour, to join in the services of the occasion. As many of the boys of the school also as could be accommodated were with us. Quachung, pale and emaciated, was supported by Miss Jones, while Bishop Boone, in Chinese, performed the baptismal service, and afterwards addressed the boys present. The countenance of the little sufferer was so composed, his behaviour so like a Christian, and he apparently so near death, that none could witness it and not be moved. Even manly cheeks were suf-

fused with tears. It broke up the deep fountain of human sympathy. Doubtless, the angels, those 'ministering spirits,' ever on the wing, were witnesses of the scene, and desired to understand the nature of that faith that can support a heathen child in such an hour.

"One morning after the baptism, I went in to inquire after Quachung. He was sitting in a chair attentively listening to the instructions of Bishop Boone, while he read, in Chinese, the twenty-third Psalm, and repeated the precious promise, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. The countenance of little Quachung was calm and peaceful; his glossy eye was intently fixed upon the bishop while he was conversing; and one could read the inward support of his soul from the promise; he was receiving 'the kingdom of God as a little child.' He had been sitting quietly in Miss Jones' lap for some time without speaking; at length raising his eyes, and looking directly in her face, he said, 'My heart rejoices.' 'Why,' said she, 'does your heart rejoice?' 'Because I am not afraid to die; I love Jesus; I am going to Jesus.'

"My services were requested in the duty of watching; it was the night when the summons came. He was very restless, wishing to be taken up and laid down at very short intervals; and to have his mouth moistened constantly with tea, while he tried to converse. I listened attentively to understand, and as he turned his eyes upward, with a composed and pleasant expression, I distinguished 'tien kwang,' meaning 'heaven's light.' I asked Quachung, 'Do you see light?' He answered, 'tien,' 'heaven.' I was satisfied that he was conscious that his departure was near.

"His teachers were much fatigued, and I forbore to call them; but they awaking perceived a change in his voice, and were instantly by his side. They thought it best to call his mother. She came to his bedside, but there was no recognition by the boy. She immediately commenced a dreadful wailing, according to Chinese custom, calling the spirit to come back to her again. But that spirit was on heavenly wing, plumed for the skies; he heeded not; but, after a few more hours of difficult breathing, sweetly passed away like the setting of the summer's sun.

"Such are the flowers that, under gospel culture, are watered in heathen soil, and then transplanted to the paradise of God."

THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS ECHO.

TRUE faith produces love to God and man :
Say, Echo, is not this the gospel plan?
The gospel plan.

Must I my faith and love to Jesus show,
By doing good to all, both friend and foe?
Both friend and foe.

But if a brother hates and treats me ill,
Must I return him good, and love him still?
Love him still.

If he my failings watches to reveal,
Must I his faults as carefully conceal?
As carefully conceal.

But if my name and character be blast,
And cruel malice, too, a long time last;
And if I sorrow and affliction know,
He loves to add unto my cup of woe;
In this uncommon, this peculiar case,
Sweet Echo, say, must I still love and bless?
Still love and bless.

Whatever usage ill I may receive,
Must I be patient still, and still forgive?
Be patient still, and still forgive.

Why, Echo, how is this? Thou'rt sure a dove,
Thy voice shall teach me nothing else but love.
Nothing else but love.

Amen: with all my heart; then be it so,
'Tis all delightful, just, and good. I know;
And now to practise I'll directly go,
Directly go.

Things being so, whoever me reject,
My gracious God me surely will protect.
Surely will protect.

Thenceforth I'll roll on Him my every care,
And then both friend and foe embrace in prayer.
Embrace in prayer.

But after all the duties I have done,
Must I in point of merit them disown,
And trust for heaven through Jesus' blood alone?
Through Jesus' blood alone.

Echo, enough ! Thy counsels to my ear
Are sweeter than to flowers the dewdrop's tear ;
Thy wise instructive lessons please me well,
I'll go and practise them. Farewell ! Farewell !
Practise them ! Farewell ! Farewell !



THE END OF THOSE THINGS.

THE EMBARKATION.

"WE are so glad to have you with us again, dear uncle; it is long since you paid us a visit," said Celia; to which her sister Maria added, "Yes, very long; and it is an addition to our pleasure in seeing you, that you came while we were staying here: you cannot think, uncle, what a pleasant place this is, nor how much we enjoy it."

Mr. Daly and his two nieces were standing on the top of a cliff which commanded a view of one of the finest harbours in the United Kingdom. Its waters, gleaming brightly in the sunshine, and unruffled by a single wave, lay before them. The hills which enclosed this wide basin were green with woods and fields, except where the busy town from whence the little party had walked forth, arose, one tier of houses above another, crowned by the church with its castellated turret, the whole reflected again in the mirror beneath. A few ships of war and some other vessels lying at anchor, yachts with their snow-white sails gliding lazily along, and steamers cutting across the waters in every direction, gave interest and animation to the scene.

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Mr. Daly gazed upon it for some minutes in silence, and then said, "I do not wonder, dear nieces, at your calling this a delightful place. It ought to do us good to contemplate such a scene as this; and callous must be the heart of one who could view this display of the power of Him that 'gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap,' and 'layeth up the depth in store-houses,' without responding to the psalmist's words, 'Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him,' *Psa. xxxiii. 7, 8.*"

"I knew you would be pleased with this prospect, uncle," answered Celia. "I never gaze upon it without remembering the poet's allusion to our seaports in his enumeration of the beauties of our native Ireland."

"Glens where ocean comes
To 'scape the wild wind's rage;
And harbours, worthiest homes,
Where freedom's sails could anchor."

"But uncle," said Maria, "though the beautiful scenery excites my sister's poetical rapture, it is not the only attraction which this place possesses. We have various amusements, such as regattas, balls, parties, with the society of fashionable and even intellectual people, and ——"

"Enough, my niece," interrupted Mr. Daly; "do not extend the catalogue till you answer me one question; What is the end of those things?"

The young ladies looked surprised, and Maria replied, "Really, uncle, you puzzle me. The end of those things is just to amuse us, and make the time pass. Surely you who like to have people happy can see no objection to that; still you look grave."

"And do they make you happy?" her uncle inquired.

"Well, sir, perhaps happy is rather too strong a term."

"Yet I cannot feel satisfied with anything for my dear nieces which has a lower end in view," he answered.

"Uncle," cried Celia, "I wonder that one of your experience should expect so much as that. But not entirely to disappoint the kind interest that you take in our enjoyments, let us tell you of some of our doings here."

The nieces now entered into an animated detail for the entertainment of their uncle. They were much attached to him, having, from earliest childhood, found him ever ready to enter into all their little joys and griefs; and though it was a long time since they had seen him, they chatted away with the unreserved freedom of former days. Mr. Daly listened in

silence, still looking, what Maria had called, very grave. Of this she at last inquired the reason, and as he was about to answer, the sound of music was heard. It proceeded from a fine military band playing on board a steam-boat laden with soldiers, which was rapidly approaching, a crowd of people moving parallel on the shore, waving hats and shouting. The steamer stopped alongside of a transport which lay opposite to where our party stood. The band ceased—the soldiers ascended to the deck, and when they were all on board, took off their caps and gave three cheers, which were loudly responded to from the crowd on shore, who then dispersed.

“What an animating scene!” exclaimed Maria. “Enough to infuse a spirit of heroism into any one who witnesses it.”

“It does not seem to have produced that effect upon yonder poor woman,” Mr. Daly answered, directing their attention to a middle aged female who stood not far off. With both her hands she had grasped the low parapet wall which ran along the top of the cliff, as if to support herself in a firm position, while she gazed with straining eyes upon the vessel in which the troops had just embarked. Her face was pale, and tears, of which she seemed unconscious, ran down her cheek.

“Poor woman,” said Maria, “she seems as unmoved by the exciting influence of the scene as uncle was by those which we described to him.”

“And it may be for the same reason,” observed their uncle. “Perhaps it is because she looks beyond the present to consider what is the end of those things; but I must try and find out.”

He approached her, and his nieces saw that he addressed some questions to her which she seemed scarcely to notice, and answered briefly without taking her eyes from off the absorbing object upon which they were fixed. After a little while he spoke again, and they could hear that it was in the national tongue. At the well known sounds the stranger turned, and looking at Mr. Daly, it appeared that she was at once melted by the pity which his countenance expressed. She now readily entered into conversation with him, and though the young ladies were ignorant of the language in which it was carried on, it was evident that the subject was one of deep interest to every feeling of her heart.

When they were, at length, rejoined by their uncle, he said, “I was right; the being whom this afflicted woman loves best in the world, her only son, was, some weeks ago, induced to leave her by the attractions of a recruiting party, and is now

embarked in that vessel, for foreign service. Her being fully aware of the privations and dangers to which he will be exposed, occasioned her insensibility to the exhilarating influence of the martial music, and other accompaniments of the embarkation. Like myself, dear nieces, when I heard of the exciting scenes you had been engaged in, she looked to the probable end of those things, and sorrowed for her beloved child who thought only of the present."

"But, uncle," said Celia, willing to prevent any more personal application of the subject; "perhaps the young man engaged in the service from feeling that it was his duty to defend his country."

"If so," her uncle answered, "his parent has a consolation denied to me. Can you wonder at my looking grave when I find my children engaged in the service of one who is the enemy of their lawful king, and immersed in pursuits that are calculated to banish him from their affections, and even their memories?"

"Oh! uncle, what an accusation! In whose service do you suppose us to be engaged?" cried Maria.

"In the service of the god of this world," he replied, "or the prince of this world, as he is often called in Scripture. One of whom the Lord Jesus Christ has said, he 'hath nothing in me,' John xiv. 30."

The sisters were again surprised, perhaps angry; but the tone and look with which these words were spoken at once dispelled the latter feeling, they were so expressive of affection and regret. The little party had left the noisy beach, and were passing through a gentleman's grounds in which they had the privilege of being allowed to walk. They proceeded in silence until they came to a rustic seat, placed under the canopy of a large sycamore, where Mr. Daly sat down, motioning to his nieces to follow his example. He then said,

"My dears, you think that I have spoken harshly, but count me not as an enemy because I tell you the truth. However, on a subject of such importance as that which I have been referring to, I would not wish you to take anything on my authority; I would have you convinced on the word of Him who cannot lie, and on nothing less." He took out a pocket Bible, and opening it, continued, "You think my language strong, but it is not more so than this; 'The friendship of the world is enmity with God,' James iv. 4; 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him,' 1 John ii.

15; with many other declarations to the same effect. Now when I find you, my dear children, immersed in the pursuits of the world, can you wonder that my heart grieves over you? You tell me that the object of these pursuits which occupy your whole attention is amusement. It is written here, 'She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth,' 1 Tim. v. 6. Another end in view is to make the time pass. Here you are commanded to redeem the time, Eph. v. 16. Bearing all this in mind, like the poor woman we have just seen, the gaiety and splendour of the present cannot lead me for a moment to forget what is the end of those things."

"And what is it, uncle?" asked Celia, trembling, while tears stood in her eyes.

"The word of God says it is 'death,' my child," Mr. Daly answered, pointing to the 21st verse of the sixth chapter of Romans.

She looked over the context for some minutes, and then said, "The deeds condemned here are those of sin. Now, dear uncle, would you apply a stronger term than foolish to what we have been engaged in?"

"Yes, my child," he answered, turning over the leaves of the Bible; "our unerring guide informs us that 'the thought of foolishness is sin,' Prov. xxiv. 9—observe, even the thought."

An interval of silence ensued, when Mr. Daly again addressed his nieces: "I have a request to make of you both; will you grant it?"

"Certainly, dear uncle. We may safely promise, for you are not likely to ask anything but what will be right and good for us to perform."

"It is this; that every day you study together a portion of God's word, carefully examining how far all you do, say, think, or read, may be in accordance with its Divine tenets."

"Oh! uncle."

"You shrink at the idea of such an ordeal, and no wonder. Where faithfully applied, every mouth must be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God. But, oh! the mercy and goodness of Him with whom we have to do. The same Scriptures which prove us to be lost sinners, reveal to us one 'who is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him,' Heb. vii. 25. And may the Holy Spirit soon lead you to feel that though the wages of sin—the end of all un-sanctified pursuits—is death, the gift of God is eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ."

E. F. G.

"PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD."

ALTHOUGH the life of man is short and uncertain, sinners go on unconcerned in the way that leads to eternal death. They take no heed to the solemn warnings that so often grate upon the ear; friends may die, acquaintances may be laid in the cold grave, still they go on heedless of death and eternity.

In the life of every one there are times at which the Spirit of God seems to strive with redoubled force; times when the warning voice, "Prepare to meet thy God," comes home with stronger power to the soul, and times when the sinner feels inclined to give up his ways of sin and folly, and take to ways of righteousness; to many these times prove of great advantage, but to others they are only as the morning cloud and early dew that soon pass away.

I recollect, after several years had passed away, revisiting my native town, and taking a walk one day round the church, thinking over days that were passed, trusting that many who had worshipped in that house of prayer were now mingling their hallelujahs of praise before the throne of glory in heaven; and also, mournful thought, fearing that many had listened to the warning voice of the gospel—many had wept at the grave of some loved one—and when the words, full of hope and comfort to the child of God, "In sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life," were read, have thought of their own death and of eternal things, have resolved to lead a life to the glory of God; but their good resolutions soon passed away, and they may be mingling their cries with the lost souls in everlasting despair. My dear reader, I trust that this will never be the case with you. If you are now unprepared for death, oh delay not the securing the salvation of your soul any longer, but this moment come to the Saviour of the world, and he will change your heart, and make you meet for heaven.

Upon reading the inscriptions on the tomb-stones, I found the names of many whom I once knew. Some died whilst young, others in middle age, and a few reached the time limited for man's stay in this world; some full of years were gathered to their fathers.

The first grave to which my attention was directed is that of a very dear friend, one with whom I have sat and listened to the voice of the preacher; with whom I have often mingled my voice of praise to the throne of God; with whom I have often, when a child, played; with whom I have often walked to the house of prayer: but now she is gone, and nothing re-

mains of her but a green hillock and a grave-stone; and such, perhaps, e'er long, dear reader, will be all that remains of you. It is a great consolation to the friends whom she left behind to think that she lived the life of a Christian, and died a happy death. Of her it may be said as of Timothy, "She knew the Scriptures from a child," and which, under the blessing of God, made her "wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." Notwithstanding, there is something very melancholy in the death of one cut off in the bloom of youth, in the midst of usefulness—the flower just opening into bloom nipped by the cold hand of death, and its beauty faded by the grave. How true the words of the poet—

"The morning flowers display their sweets,
And gay their silken leaves unfold;
As heedless of the noon-tide heats,
As thoughtless of the evening cold!"

But melancholy as the thought must be to those left behind that she is gone, and has left them to weep and lament her loss; however heart-rending it may be to find her place in the family circle vacant, still the consolation of her being with her Saviour outweighs all earthly considerations, and throws all transitory things into the shade. A bright crown of glory now encircles her brow—a diadem brighter than the brightest gem now entwines her head, and through the countless ages of eternity she will sing her Saviour's love.

My dear reader, you are perhaps as young as my friend was, but are you preparing for a brighter world, as she did? If you are, you will be like her, happy for ever; but if you do not "prepare to meet your God" you will after death be unspeakably miserable. Let the few observations I have made sink deep into your heart and lead you to Christ—to that fountain opened for sin and uncleanness; then, if you receive Christ as your Saviour, you will be able to sing his praises upon earth, and after death, to join the ransomed myriads in heaven in ascribing "honour and power to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever."

You will be able to say—

"E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.

"Then in a nobler, sweeter song
I'll sing thy power to save,
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave."

The next inscription I observed, as one of deep interest, was, "To the memory of —, aged 22." "Her funeral day was to have been her wedding day." What a lesson these words, engraved upon a tomb-stone, should be to all. Never did the words of the poet come home with more force to my mind—

"Dangers stand thick through all the ground,
To push us to the tomb;
And fierce diseases wait around
To hurry mortals home."

Never did I feel more deeply impressed with the truth—"In the midst of life we are in death."

May the fate of this young woman be a warning to all to be always ready for death. No doubt she was looking forward to the day of her marriage, little thinking that upon that day she would be laid in the cold and silent grave; on that day, instead of being decked in her bridal garments, her only ornaments would be the coffin and the shroud. Oh, all ye gay and thoughtless, think of these things; think not too much of the pleasures of the world, for they are all unstable; think that instead of this young woman walking with a light spirit into the house of God for the marriage ceremonies, her lifeless form was carried there in her coffin, followed by mourning friends; the clods of the valley were to be her pillow, and the grave her home. I would hope she died in full assurance of a blissful immortality, through faith in her Saviour.

My young readers, do you ever think of the uncertainty of life—that nothing here is of a certain nature? Do you ever think of a state beyond this where you will have to live with the redeemed in heaven or the lost in hell? In one of these states you are certain to exist. Does it not, therefore, behove you to secure the good one and shun the bad? Most assuredly it does. Then, let me tell you, there is only one way whereby you may obtain a title to heaven—it is by the cross of Christ. If you will believe in Christ you will be saved, but if you go on in the ways of sin you will be lost—lost for ever!

The next grave at which I paused was that of a gentleman of middle age, whom I recollect. He was taken ill whilst in the bloom of health, and cut off in the short period of two days. Poor fellow! he led a life of careless indifference to all eternal things, the pleasures of this life were all he seemed to care about, but he was cut off from those things dear to him to appear before his God. As the tree falls so shall it lie—

"There's no repentance in the grave,
Nor pardon offered to the dead."

Does the drunkard, in the midnight revel, think of this? Does the sabbath-breaker, whilst polluting God's holy day, think of these things? Does that gay young man, or thoughtless young woman, in the ball-room or the play-house, think, whilst the merry laugh goes round, that perhaps before another day has run its course—before another sun sinks to rest, he or she may be numbered with the dead; that the eye that now beams with delight may be closed in death, and the spirit return to God who gave it?—

“ Oh, trust not to your fleeting breath,
Nor call your time your own;
Around you see the scythe of death
Is mowing thousands down.
The grass when dead revives again,
You die to live again;
But ah! if death should prove the door
To everlasting pain.”

Yes, my dear readers, here is the danger of a life spent in the service of sin; when death arrives it opens to the sinner the door to eternal pain—pain without end, in that bottomless pit of everlasting despair. Surely, there is not one of you but shudders at the thought of eternal death; but as certainly as the sun rises and sets, so sure as summer, winter, seed-time and harvest come and go at their appointed seasons, so surely if you go on in sin and die without an interest in the ransom paid by Christ, you will have to pass a long, long eternity in the company of lost souls, in the bitter pangs of eternal death.

But shall I not turn from this dismal picture, and again point out to you the way for escape from such a doom? That way is, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” This Saviour is now waiting with open arms to receive you; the words of the Holy Spirit are now put before you, saying, “Come, for all things are ready.” Listen to the invitation, “Oh, come to him now, and he will save you, and make you meet for heaven.”

“ Drawn by his bleeding love,
Ye wandering sheep, draw near;
Christ calls you from above,
His charming accents hear.”

Oh, come to him now, and make the salvation of your soul the great business of life; you will then be able to look forward to death without fear, and, trusting in the righteousness of your Saviour, you will be able to sing—

"Why should I doubt his love at last,
 With anxious thoughts perplexed?
 Who saved me in the troubles past
 Will save me in the next,—
 Will save, till at my latest hour,
 With more than conquest blest,
 I soar beyond temptation's power
 To my Redeemer's breast."

A. J.

SAVING, NOT SORDID; OR, THE YOUNG MERCHANT.

"Do look at Miss M—," said Eliza to her brother William, as they sat together at a window, amusing themselves by making remarks on the passers by. "I do think that she has had that bonnet these two years; did you ever see such a thing?"

"And to see her walking through the wet streets!—she who could so well afford to go in a carriage, for they say she is immensely rich," William replied.

"I have heard that she was very generous," said Eliza; "but if so, she would not be so saving of her money. I am certain she must be very stingy."

Their father laid down the book which he had been reading, and thus addressed them.

"Stop, my children; such remarks as these are always improper, but in the present case you have, I regret to say, betrayed an error of the heart, and another of the judgment."

The young people looked surprised; and Eliza, colouring deeply, inquired, "In what way, papa?"

"You were quite ignorant of Miss M—'s reasons for practising economy; and, without hesitation, you imputed her doing so to the unamiable and degrading vice of stinginess. Was this consistent with that Christian love that thinketh no evil, believeth all things, hopeth all things?"

"Indeed it was not, dear papa, and I am very sorry for it."

"Then the error of judgment of which you have been guilty. It is a very common, though a great mistake, to suppose that because people are self-denying, careful, and economical in their habits they are necessarily penurious."

"Well, father," observed William, "the inference seems a natural one. When we see people working hard to make money, and stinting themselves and others to save it, how can we help concluding that they are sordid, miserly creatures, whom we must despise?"

"First, my son, I think we can help it by a little exercise

of that charity of which I have just been speaking, and suppose that our neighbours are trafficking and economizing for a good purpose until we know the contrary. Next, we must help it when we have had experience, because we shall then learn that such a conclusion is often erroneous. The fact is, William, cleverness in making money, and rigid economy in using it, have often been found consistent not only with the strictest integrity, but with the noblest generosity, and with every Christian virtue which can adorn the character of the renewed man. This has been beautifully exemplified by one whose memoirs I was lately reading.*

"He was born with what I think you seem inclined to despise, a genius for commerce, just as other men have it for being poets, painters, or mathematicians. He was about ten years old when his mercantile predilections were first displayed. He attended a school three miles from home, and one day, on his way, picked up a horse-shoe, carried it the three miles, and sold it to a blacksmith for a penny; this was the first money he ever possessed. He had observed at school that only six marbles were got for a halfpenny, but fourteen for a penny. By buying a pennyworth, and selling to his comrades two different halfpennyworths, he earned two marbles honestly, and carried on a profitable trade. In another way he added to his stock of money. One of his sisters, who helped his parents in their shop, having, in drawing treacle, let it run over, after taking up what she thought was worth saving, was going to wash away the remainder. He ran to his mother, and asked leave to scrape up the remainder and sell it for himself. Having gained her consent, he set to work, scraped it up as clean as possible, and sold it for three-halfpence. What do you think of him now, William?"

"That he was a mean, niggardly boy, papa; I cannot think of him as anything else," William replied.

"Then you judge wrongly, as we usually do when we judge prematurely of an action, without knowing the motive which impelled it. I would also remind you of the very high authority which we have for the practice of rigid economy. When He, at whose command were the riches of the universe, had feasted the hungry multitude, he desired his disciples to gather up the fragments, that nothing should be lost," John vi. 12.

"I had not thought of that," said Eliza. "It is indeed high authority against wastefulness, and I hope ever to observe it in future."

Her father continued: "I think our young merchant's next venture was more hazardous; even the purchase of a basket of cucumbers, which he sold again at the notable profit of ninepence. And now to prove that the boy who had this singular passion for trade, and tenacious care of money, had, as his biographer observes, 'his heart set upon something nobler than a plentiful store of pelf,' when his original penny had increased to some shillings, he invested it all in a purchase that could yield no return but poetry and devotion, two things which people are apt to deem incompatible with this great love of traffic. He purchased 'Wesley's Hymns,' and, to use his own words, thought himself 'a rich and happy boy.'"

"Ah, I wronged him," exclaimed William. "There was something better in his heart than a desire for gold; at least he had a taste for poetry."

"Yes, and for something more important. It is stated that, when about nine years of age, passing the door of his mother's room one day, he heard her engaged in earnest prayer for her family, and for himself by name. He thought, 'My mother is more anxious that I should be saved than I am for my own salvation.' That moment he determined to serve God, while he lived, and I rejoice to say was enabled, by Divine grace, to do so.

"This little tradesman now proceeded to deal in live stock, and went on accumulating, by seizing every opportunity, such as buying a few eggs or chickens, a young donkey, or a pig. Thus he gained not only profit, but, by his own observation and experience, principles by which he afterwards guided his course, till he became one of the most extensive merchants in England. By the time he had reached his fourteenth year he was old in practice and sagacity, and possessed thirty pounds, the fruit of his boyish barter. He was now to begin the world, and was apprenticed to his elder brother, who had a shop. 'One might imagine,' says his historian, 'that he would go forth full of visions as to the golden days to come. Already his penny had become thirty pounds; what might not his present capital become if used with equal ability?' But no; his parents wanted help, and here is his own simple record of how he disposed of his earnings. 'I had saved thirty pounds, which I presented to my parents; which they intended to return, but were incapable.'"

"How noble! how beautiful!" Eliza exclaimed.

"Yes," answered William; "I like him greatly now."

Their father continued: "On this, his biographer remarks,

‘As he sets forth on the hard path of life, fresh from this filial offering, who does not see beauty and blessing resting on the head of the penniless apprentice?’ When he took the tempting thirty pounds which exalted him above his comrade boys, and laid it all in the hand of his good mother, it was the best venture of his life. *No investment under the sky is so sure as a parent’s blessing.* Temporal welfare is made over to the dutiful son, by ‘the first commandment, with promise.’ The amount of his next saving was not so great: he had gathered only fifteen shillings, when two of his sisters set up in business for themselves, and he laid it out in a little stock of coals for them. During his apprenticeship, while performing his duty in all respects, he continued to traffic on his own account at every opportunity.

“But we should mistake his character if we suppose that he laboured for nothing but money. He ardently longed for the refreshment and elevation of mind which knowledge, fitly sought and judiciously selected, is calculated to bestow. About this time he wrote thus: ‘I will keep my eye singly directed to the attainment of religious and useful knowledge. O wisdom! O knowledge! The very expressions convey ideas so delightful to my mind that I am ready to leap out and fly.’ Being as good an economist of time as of money, he effected this object also.

“But I have exceeded the portion of this remarkable man’s history, which I intended to recount, and will only mention the third instance in which he gave away all the fruits of his labours, and left himself penniless for the benefit of others. When his apprenticeship was over, he continued to serve his brother for a small salary for three years. At the end of that time he had saved one hundred pounds, but his brother had embarked in a speculation which went wrong, and to save him from ruin our young hero, as I must call him, made him accept this sum.

“You have heard enough of the boyhood and youth of this extraordinary person to form some idea of his after life. When one of the richest and most extensive merchants in England, he manifested the same characteristics, more fully developed. His active benevolence to all, especially to the persons employed in his service, was great; but in all his efforts for them the soul was his end, though, after the example of Him who loved souls most, and bought them dearest, he gave for the relief of the body all that he could give. In minute attention to economy he was also unchanged. A friend relates,

that once, in passing through a warehouse, he observed one of his young men cutting paper for bags in a manner which incurred loss of time and waste of material. He pointed out the mistake in the kindest manner, folded the paper, and cut a considerable quantity of it himself, to illustrate his point, both in regard to material and time."

"Thank you, dear father," said Eliza; "I hope I shall not forget the lesson this interesting account of the young merchant has taught me, and that in future I may not form uncharitable judgments of people's actions without knowing their motives."

"I hope so, my child. And has the young merchant taught you anything, William?"

"Yes, father; I have learned the difference between being saying and sordid. I believe your story has also removed from my mind a foolish notion that cleverness in business, and strict attention to it, were inconsistent with every sort of refinement, and even with spiritual religion."

"This prejudice is not uncommon, and I am glad you have got rid of it, my son; it is foolish and vulgar. The earliest part of this excellent man's life proves it to be erroneous. While actively engaged in making pence by the sale of marbles and treacle, he still displays elegance of taste and piety. As the relator observes, 'The genius of Charles Wesley was, to his infancy, a lark at morn, musically inviting his eye toward heaven; a nightingale at evening-tide, pouring upon the shades of life melody from the invisible.'

"You will, therefore, perceive the truth of, and carefully remember, the Christian poet's words—

"Truth is not local, God alike pervades
And fills the world of traffic and the shades;
And may be feared amidst the busiest scenes,
Or scorned where business never intervenes."

G.

"NOT AFRAID TO MEET AGAIN."

"Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men."—Acts xxiv. 16.

WHEN staying, a few months since, in company with an invalid, at a beautiful watering-place, I used frequently to amuse myself in my solitary wanderings along its lovely hills, by entering into conversation with the clean and fresh-looking country people, who flocked each morning to the numerous villas, as the best market for the produce of their farms and gardens. By this means too, it often fell to my lot to pick

up an extra delicacy for the table of my young relative, which, as being so procured, was, of course, doubly prized.

In one of these morning walks, I was accosted by a country-woman, having a basket on her arm, to the contents of which she somewhat pressingly invited my attention, assuring me that her fowls were excellent, and came from a first-rate farm some miles away. These said fowls would have charmed an epicure—so plump and delicate were they. Tempted by their appearance I inquired the price of them, and when told it, I, in accordance with custom, bade her a trifle less than she asked. She hesitatingly came down to my terms, and I continued to walk by her side, until we arrived at my residence. While asking her various questions as to the distance she had come, etc., I had time to observe her very sickly appearance, and on inquiring I found she had been a sufferer from ill health, and that, moreover, she had a large young family at home.

The fowls being deposited, and the money paid, she dropped me a curtesy, and bidding me "good morning," added, as she turned to go—"I'm sure you'll find I've told you the truth, and that my fowls will eat uncommon tender, *and so, I shall not be afraid to meet you again.*"

My eye followed the poor woman as she slowly ascended the steep walk from our villa, while her last words, "So, I shall not be afraid to meet you again," rang in my ears. Her look of delicacy on the one hand, and the fineness of my little purchase on the other, caused instantly the inquiry of conscience, "But may not I be ashamed to meet her again? For will not the trifle I have deducted from the price of her fowls, be of more importance to her than to me?" This idea no sooner occurred to my mind, than I hastened after her, and on overtaking her, said, "I have run after you, my good woman, to give you the full price for your fowls, because I think as you are but poorly, even this trifle may help you." She looked both astonished and pleased, and I felt better satisfied.

Still however, her parting remark, "So, I shall not be afraid to meet you again," continued to haunt me, as once more I pursued my wanderings among the hills, and my thoughts meanwhile, ran, straight on through time and space, to the grand winding up of all earthly things, even to that great day when all who shall have played their various parts on this lower scene shall again meet, face to face, before their Maker and their Judge. Ah! thought I, will there be no human being before that awful tribunal, whose presence would recal acts of injustice, or of unkindness, and who therefore I might be afraid

again to meet? and there too, I further thought, "not deeds and words only will be recalled, but motives and feelings will be unmasked; and have I indulged in none that I shall not be afraid to see exposed there?" To what watchfulness and care should not such anticipations induce!

It had perhaps been wiser, (while considerations of so momentous a character were thus forcing themselves on my attention,) had I persevered in a rigorous self-scrutiny; but, as too often happens, the contemplation of the inner man was abandoned for that of the world in general. And what did I in that outer world behold? Did I see a scrupulous care, among all ranks, so to act as never to be afraid again to meet their fellows? The rapid review which memory then took of the history of even the nominally Christian world, commencing with monarchs on their thrones, and descending through all grades, down to the humble class of the country woman whose remark led to this train of thought, certainly did not prompt a favourable reply to this mental query of mine, and I felt how much happier it would be both for individuals and society at large, were there a more constant and vivid remembrance maintained by all, that however sundered on earth, the day must come when all will be re-assembled. For "we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ," Rom. xiv. 10. Surely, surely it would be the part of wisdom to provide for that day, and so to take heed that no wronged ones shall have to appear as our accusers on that solemn occasion: "For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested," Mark iv. 22.

I confess I shuddered, while dwelling on the (so called) great ones of earth; and beheld in imagination the haughty conquerors of nations called to the bar of the "Prince of Peace," and there again encountering the mighty hosts slain to gratify their lust of power. Soul-harrowing moment that! Will they not shrink from the appalling sight of those millions of souls sent by their fiat prematurely into eternity? Oh! "The earth shall then disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain," Isa. xxvii. 21.

From conquerors, steeped in human blood, my thoughts roamed to deceivers of souls; to spiritual jugglers for this world's pelf; to false miracle-workers, "speaking lies in hypocrisy," 1 Tim. iv. 2; and to cruel persecutors: and will not such as these be afraid again to meet their prey?

But not acts of commission only will there be taken into account, but those of omission also, and I could not but dwell on the immense responsibilities of all entrusted with the care

of either the souls or the bodies of others; of ministers, parents, guardians, teachers, and even of masters and mistresses; and of each and all of these having again to meet those whose fate so much depended on their guidance, on their precepts, and examples. Should not all such so act as not to be afraid to meet again their respective charges?

But here my thoughts took a different turn, and one closer to the occasion which called forth the words, "So, I shall not be afraid to meet you again;" and I dwelt on the dealings of man with man in respect rather to the purse than to the life, although, sad to say, the latter, even here, only too often becomes indirectly sacrificed to the interests of the former.

An exhibition I had once seen, was brought to my recollection. It was that of a drop of water powerfully magnified, in which creatures of all shapes and sizes were to be seen darting at and preying on each other, more especially the greater on the less; and it seemed to me but too correct a picture of a large portion of poor fallen men, who, if they do not actually bite and devour, yet (where gain is concerned) do, in all conceivable ways, try to deceive and outwit one another. Were this not the case, where would be the necessity for constantly guarding against trickery in so many of the transactions of every day life? In some trades, for instance, how much there is that will not bear the light! Where even for small gains, poison (although, may be, in but homœopathic doses) is secretly mingled with articles of food. Oh! tremble ye who do so, for ye will have again to meet your victims where ye will reap the due rewards of your heartless and cruel dealings.

I bethought, in idea, an accountable being busily mixing red lead with cayenne pepper, and I almost shuddered as I thought of the delicate membranes that are often brought into contact with so a 'eterious a substance; yet this species of adulteration has been ascertained to be a not uncommon one!

Oh! if such cruel traffickers would but remember that they must again meet their customers where even blood may be found on their hands, surely they would pause ere, for like paltry gains, they would thus risk their immortal souls!

Then I thought I saw one scanning a prescription which had been thoughtfully and even prayerfully written, as many an anxious hope was hanging on its effects; his eyes were resting on the one ingredient which had as yet been untried, and on which the last faint hopes of recovery were built; he paused, this ingredient was rare, it was costly; another might be substituted—it would not be noxious, simply useless; and

so conscience being lulled, the exchange was made, and thus, for the gain of a half-crown or less, what a responsibility may in this way be incurred! And are there no transactions of a similar kind? It cannot be denied. How many, for instance, are at this moment anxiously inquiring, "Where can I procure for my delicate friend cod-liver oil pure and unadulterated?" and so with many other articles, although human lives may be depending upon their purity and strength.

But trickery often affects the purse rather than the life or health, and then it assumes a less dangerous character, but ever must it be mean and degrading, and most offensive to that Being whose universal eye is thus set at nought; for "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do," Heb. iv. 13; and he has said, "Let no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, because that the Lord is the avenger of all such," 1 Thess. iv. 6.

There is a dress-maker cutting off a good slice of satin or cloth, which her lady customer had justly calculated would make her a comfortable sized mantle, and this she is appropriating to her own use. She would not like that her customer should be watching her proceeding, and she forgets, or defies that eye whose presence is every where; and she pauses not to think of the last great meeting, nor of the last great account.

Then, too, what mean pilferings go on under the cloak of that word perquisite! But here there is a test as to the honesty of these transactions which might easily be applied. Would those who are pocketing these (so called) perquisites, pocket them openly, even before the eyes of their employers? if so, all may be right; but if these trickers, to salve their consciences, call that a perquisite which they are secretly abstracting from either the offices of which they may have the oversight, or even from the gardens, or larders of which they may have the care, then *mine* and *thine* (two awkward words) are distinctions no longer regarded; and however they may endeavour to reconcile such actings to their consciences, these gains are fraudulent gains, and cannot bear the light of inquiry either here or hereafter; and yet we shall all have to render an account of our deeds, be they great or small.

It is singular that so many should look upon themselves and their doings as perfectly honest, merely because they have never stolen money, although they would not scruple to take what represents it, or, in other words, to take money's worth—let that money's worth take the form of eatables or what not—especially if they can delude themselves with the notion that

such articles came under the term perquisites. But all you who are so tempted, bring your doings to the decisive test above alluded to; would you like these snug little transactions of yours to be known to those who have also an interest in them? or, are you carrying them on secretly—behind their backs; there's the test, try it: and not until you feel that when acting in the service of others you can bear your employer's eye to witness all your doings, will those doings be fully honest, or fully wise; nor until you act on these principles can you ever feel that you will not be afraid to meet those employers again, where small trusts as well as great ones will have to be weighed in the balances of the upper sanctuary.

The golden rule, Luke vi. 31; the law of love, John xv. 17, "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you," and, "I command you, that ye love one another," are also often broken by that instrument for good and evil, the tongue, James iii. Oh! did we but more seriously consider that every word (Matt. xii. 37), as well as work, must be brought before the common tribunal, we should surely weigh our words with more care; for it is written, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned," Matt. xii. 37. Especially should we learn to guard against the heavy sin of maliciously, or even thoughtlessly, tarnishing our neighbour's fame, a slur on his character being often a far more serious injury than a depredation on his purse.

Let us then feel alarmed lest words aimed against others in time, should be cited against ourselves in eternity. There is an universal ear, as well as an universal eye. May we henceforth never wantonly offend that ever listening ear! and then shall we not be afraid again to meet those who have been the subjects of our tongues, be that meeting here or hereafter.

But alas! thought I, as my morning ramble was drawing to a close, how can impure and bitter fountains send forth streams of purity and sweetness? How can hearts tainted by pride, vanity, selfishness or covetousness, supply those refreshing streams that can alone flow from hearts filled with love, humility, self-denial, tenderness, and generosity, and which ever throw a cheering glow on all who come within their loving influence? Oh no! These fountains of good and evil, these hearts of ours, must be cleansed by the application of the all-purifying blood, and thus become the fitting habitation of God's Holy Spirit, or tainted streams will issue from them. But if the fountain be thus purified, there *will* spring from it many a delightful evidence of its more heavenly character. It

so conscience being lulled, the exchange was made, and thus, for the gain of a half-crown or less, what a responsibility may in this way be incurred! And are there no transactions of a similar kind? It cannot be denied. How many; for instance, are at this moment anxiously inquiring, "Where can I procure for my delicate friend cod-liver oil pure and unadulterated?" and so with many other articles, although human lives may be depending upon their purity and strength.

But trickery often affects the purse rather than the life or health, and then it assumes a less dangerous character, but ever must it be mean and degrading, and most offensive to that Being whose universal eye is thus set at nought; for "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do," Heb. iv. 13; and he has said, "Let no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, because that the Lord is the avenger of all such," 1 Thess. iv. 6.

There is a dress-maker cutting off a good slice of satin or cloth, which her lady customer had justly calculated would make her a comfortable sized mantle, and this she is appropriating to her own use. She would not like that her customer should be watching her proceeding, and she forgets, or defies that eye whose presence is every where; and she pauses not to think of the last great meeting, nor of the last great account.

Then, too, what mean pilferings go on under the cloak of that word perquisite! But here there is a test as to the honesty of these transactions which might easily be applied. Would those who are pocketing these (so called) perquisites, pocket them openly, even before the eyes of their employers? if so, all may be right; but if these trickers, to salve their consciences, call that a perquisite which they are secretly abstracting from either the offices of which they may have the oversight, or even from the gardens, or larders of which they may have the care, then *mine* and *thine* (two awkward words) are distinctions no longer regarded; and however they may endeavour to reconcile such actings to their consciences, these gains are fraudulent gains, and cannot bear the light of inquiry either here or hereafter; and yet we shall all have to render an account of our deeds, be they great or small.

It is singular that so many should look upon themselves and their doings as perfectly honest, merely because they have never stolen money, although they would not scruple to take what represents it, or, in other words, to take money's worth—let that money's worth take the form of eatables or what not—especially if they can delude themselves with the notion that

such articles came under the term perquisites. But all you who are so tempted, bring your doings to the decisive test above alluded to; would you like these snug little transactions of yours to be known to those who have also an interest in them? or, are you carrying them on secretly—behind their backs; there's the test, try it: and not until you feel that when acting in the service of others you can bear your employer's eye to witness all your doings, will those doings be fully honest, or fully wise; nor until you act on these principles can you ever feel that you will not be afraid to meet those employers again, where small trusts as well as great ones will have to be weighed in the balances of the upper sanctuary.

The golden rule, Luke vi. 31; the law of love, John xv. 17, "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you," and, "I command you, that ye love one another," are also often broken by that instrument for good and evil, the tongue, James iii. Oh! did we but more seriously consider that every word (Matt. xii. 37), as well as work, must be brought before the common tribunal, we should surely weigh our words with more care; for it is written, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned," Matt. xii. 37. Especially should we learn to guard against the heavy sin of maliciously, or even thoughtlessly, tarnishing our neighbour's fame, a slur on his character being often a far more serious injury than a depredation on his purse.

Let us then feel alarmed lest words aimed against others in time, should be cited against ourselves in eternity. There is an universal ear, as well as an universal eye. May we henceforth never wantonly offend that ever listening ear! and then shall we not be afraid again to meet those who have been the subjects of our tongues, be that meeting here or hereafter.

But alas! thought I, as my morning ramble was drawing to a close, how can impure and bitter fountains send forth streams of purity and sweetness? How can hearts tainted by pride, vanity, selfishness or covetousness, supply those refreshing streams that can alone flow from hearts filled with love, humility, self-denial, tenderness, and generosity, and which ever throw a cheering glow on all who come within their loving influence? Oh no! These fountains of good and evil, these hearts of ours, must be cleansed by the application of the all-purifying blood, and thus become the fitting habitation of God's Holy Spirit, or tainted streams will issue from them. But if the fountain be thus purified, there *will* spring from it many a delightful evidence of its more heavenly character. It

will then exhibit the Christian love and purity so beautifully described in 1 Cor. xiii., which reigning within, will be felt around; for it will suffer long and be kind; it will not envy, nor vaunt itself; it cannot be puffed up, or behave itself unseemly. Love will not seek her own, or be easily provoked; it will think no evil, neither will it rejoice in iniquity, but it will rejoice in the truth; it will bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things; it will never fail.

My poor thoughts being thus noted down, I feel they may possibly be perused by other eyes, and that those of the writer may one day have to meet those of the reader.

Allow me then, dear reader, to beg you to unite with me in making a few all-important inquiries. Let me, in the first place, ask if we can acquit ourselves of all acts of injustice, fraud, or oppression in our dealings with our fellows? Should there be any who could justly accuse us of such crimes, and whom we should therefore be afraid again to meet, let us see if reparation be in any measure possible. A deed once done cannot indeed be undone, but does it not admit of some reparation? This is an important inquiry, for remember the same day Zaccheus declared that he made restitution to all whom he had injured, the same day Christ himself pronounced that salvation was come to his house, Luke xix. 9.

If, however, reparation be impossible, what is the next best course to pursue? Surely to confess all to Him who knows all, and then to plead, in all penitence and faith, for that precious blood once shed for sinners.

Let us also inquire whether we can wholly acquit ourselves of all that would not bear the eye of the God of love in our social and domestic relations. Can none charge us with those faults of pride, selfishness, or temper which, alas! so frequently mar the peace and happiness of all within their reach? If "trifles do make the sum of human things," and thus even a "small unkindness," be, in reality "a great offence," can you and I stand acquitted at the bar of conscience of such derelictions of the law of love? Oh! has there never been a harsh word uttered, or an unkind look given? If so, neither can be recalled; still they may be regretted deeply, and repented of sincerely, and they too may be brought within reach of the blood of sprinkling; and however we may have erred in time past, we may strive strenuously that our conduct for the future shall, by God's aid, be meek and holy; in short, that it shall henceforth be such, that we need not be afraid, or ashamed ever again to meet those with whom we may

hereafter be called upon to hold intercourse. Let us carefully see we

“Do our own self-love subdue,
And think and speak what’s just and true;
That we with care our temper guide,
Checking ill-humour, anger, pride;
And from each word our lips refrain
That might a fellow creature pain;
That we with cheerful patience bear
The little ills we all must share;
Even to all men freely give
What we would fain from them receive.”

And now, reader, I will bid you “farewell!” and if the few plain words I have addressed to you should not be effective of good, still I trust they may possess the smaller merit of being unproductive of evil, and that “so” I may feel, like the poor country-woman, “that I need not be afraid to meet you again.”

E. A. O.

GRACE JONES.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF HER, COMMUNICATED IN A LETTER TO THE
LADY H. C. L.

MY DEAR LADY C—,

WE have occasionally regaled our spiritual senses with the fragrance which issues from the graces of the Spirit, as exhaled from some of those favoured few whose walk has been in the higher ranks of human society. Allow me now to invite your attention to piety in humble life. I would beg you to accompany me to a poor thatched cottage in North Devon. Our visit will, if I mistake not, afford us an additional evidence of the unity of the faith. We shall compare our observations in the cottage with those which we deduced from some favoured mansions of the great. We shall trace in each the marked features of the children of God. We shall see the family likeness amidst every variety of educational habits and daily associations. The Spirit’s omnipotence will be visible in moulding such diversified materials into the one form and pattern of the gospel of Christ; and we shall look onwards with delight to that pure and perfect state where the varieties of outward rank and condition, having answered their appointed purposes on earth, will be exchanged for those gradations of heavenly glory and dignity which will eventually manifest an exact proportion between grace here and glory hereafter.

About twenty-seven years ago I took my family, for the benefit of a sick daughter, now beyond the reach of sin or

sickness, to Linton, in North Devon. One day I hired a little Exmoor pony, and rode straight onwards till I came to a division of the road on an extensive moor. Knowing nothing of the locality, I left it to the option of my little dumb friend as to the road I should take. His choice was soon decided, and in due time I found myself in a remote and sequestered hamlet. My great object, on arriving there, was to ascertain whether anything were done in the place for the instruction of the poor. I put up the pony at a little public-house.

"Is there any Sunday-school in this parish?"

"Oh, yes," replied the landlady, "there are as many as seventy children, and there is a day-school too. The Sunday-school was set up by a poor woman who keeps a day-school in that little white house which you see there, standing out into the middle of the street."

"What!" said I, "a Sunday-school of seventy children, and set up by a poor woman?"

"Ay, it's as sure as you stand there; and she's so poor that sometimes she can't scramble on without parish relief."

My informer perceived that she had touched a chord in my heart that vibrated, so she became quite animated, and went on: "Sure enough, she's a wonderful woman; I never saw the like of her. She knows as much of her Bible as any parson, and you would be surprised to hear how the children of her school answer questions, and they are so pretty behaved, too. There are some wild, swearing chaps here amongst the men in this place, but they dare na' swear in her presence, and yet she's a poor little woman, and a cripple, too."

The fulness of my heart quickened my footsteps towards "the little white cottage standing out into the middle of the street." I entered, and found the children all ranged around, and Grace Jones (for that was her name) the centre of the circle. They were reading the history of Joseph, in the book of Genesis; she, a little woman, about forty-five, crippled, raised up on a pair of pattens, to allow full scope to her large, black, intelligent, brilliant eyes, which no nut, nor play-thing, nor cake in a child's hand could possibly escape. On seeing me enter, clad in black, symptomatic of my office, she respectfully requested me to take the Bible and catechise the children on the portion of Scripture which had been read. This I declined, knowing that it would have defeated the object of my visit; so I retreated into a corner, near enough to hear all that passed, and not near enough either to disturb the teacher or distract the children. I was quite delighted: her questions

so apposite ; her remarks so enlightened, so practical ; her selection, as to the subject-matter before her, so judicious ; her manner animated, her heart and tongue in evident coincidence. No wonder that every eye was fixed upon her. The interest expressed in the children's countenances, as she proceeded, told you that they felt there was a reality in what was urged upon them.

As the clock struck twelve, she waved her hand, and her little auditors disappeared—no one remained but Grace and myself.

Such was the commencement of—an acquaintanceship shall I call it?—nay, rather a friendship, when a note was struck which vibrated responsively in several successive visits between the writer and the tenant of “the little white cottage” at Parracombe. It was a note which conveyed the assurance that we had one Lord, one faith, one absorbing interest, one glorious prospect. It is a note whose cadence still lingers on my ear with the sweetest reminiscence ; and it will be resumed in that world of spirits where all will be harmony, and where each one will make up a portion of that family of which the Everlasting Father is the Head, and the Incarnate Son the Elder Brother.

Bear with me, dear Lady C—, if I chat on about the jewel of Parracombe—a jewel now shining in the courts above. Her history, as I received it from her own lips, is as follows :—

“I was once a worldly woman, blind as to the concerns of my soul, and ignorant of a Saviour. I was always fond of reading, and got my neighbours to subscribe with me to a circulating library at Barnstaple. Some got novels, and all such kind of trash, and so it went on for some time. I kept a school in those days for a livelihood, but I did not teach the children the Bible, for I did not understand it myself ; neither did I talk to them of a Saviour, for how could I when I did not love him, nor trust in him myself? However, it came into my mind one day—these novels are not quite the thing, I think I will begin and read the Bible ; so I gave up novels, and began the Bible ; and as I read on, I saw it would never do to go to novels again, and I began, for the first time, to have a real concern about my soul, and a real desire to be saved. I had no one to talk to me about these things, but I read in my Bible about Jesus Christ, and what he had done to save sinners, and I felt that I was a sinner, and needed such a Saviour ; so the Lord led me to put my trust in him, and to love him, and to serve him.

"And now, I thought, I must do all I can to tell these poor ignorant children what Jesus Christ has done to save their souls; so I began to teach them in a very different way to what I had done before. I instructed them in the Bible; I talked to them about their souls, and about the Saviour, and I bless God I have seen a great change in them since I was changed myself. Some of them now have very tender consciences, and they don't love to go into scenes of wickedness, as once they did.

"There are two little girls (mentioning them by name), who were taken to the wakes the other day by their parents. Those wakes, sir, are dreadful scenes of wickedness. So these dear little creatures got leave to go into a room by themselves; and there they went and sang their hymns and read their chapters, while their parents were at the wakes, till it was time to go home: and, sir, I can tell you another thing, for I see you love to hear about my children.

"There was a poor wicked woman, who lived in a solitary house at the further end of the village. She got very ill, so that she could hardly help herself. One day, some time after, a neighbour called on her, and found her reading her Bible, and two of my scholars were sitting in the corner of the room. This neighbour talked to her, and the woman seemed quite serious, and instead of blaspheming and cursing, as she always did before, she talked so nicely about her soul, and about the Saviour, that the neighbour was astonished. 'Well, Jenny,' said she, 'who taught you all this?' 'Ah,' said Jenny, 'it is those two little angels,' pointing to the two little girls in the corner of the room. They came to me in their play-hours, and they swept my room, and made everything comfortable for me; and they fetched me water from the well, and then they would sit them down and read their Testament to me; and they talked to me about my soul, and they told me about a Saviour; and if I get to heaven at last, it will all be owing to those dear little creatures.'"

I would pause for awhile, dear Lady C—, to ask, Is not all this a striking illustration of the excellence of that remark made by a poor pious negro woman in the West Indies, "Everybody is somebody?" She herself was a practical proof of the truth of her own aphorism. Yes, truly; we all carry about with us a secret influence either for good or for evil: Character is contagious—influence is diffusive. What a weapon for good is put into our hands! Let us cast our influence into the sanctuary. Christian consistency is "a visible rhe-

toric." We all may, with God's help, be rhetoricians in this way.

I proceed with Grace Jones: if I tax your patience, tell me so.

I was sitting by her one day, and said, "I wish, Grace, you would tell me something about the Sunday-school; how did you accomplish it?"

"Why, sir, you must know, that when I was brought to feel a concern about my own soul, I took much to heart the state of our village on a Sunday, the children idling about, or getting into orchards, and doing all kind of mischief. Oh, thinks I, if I could but set up a Sunday-school in this place. I often thought of it; I often longed for it. At last, one summer, a nice gentleman, a stranger,* called on me, and asked, 'Is there any Sunday-school in this place?' 'No, sir, I wish with all my heart there was.' 'Well, if you will set up a Sunday-school, I will find you with books for it.' 'Thank you, sir, a thousand times.' So God heard my prayer, and gave me the wish of my heart; however, near a whole fortnight passed, and I heard nothing of the books. At last, at the end of a fortnight, such a large quantity of nice books came—just the kind of books, sir, that I wanted. So I instantly gave notice in the village that I was going to have a Sunday-school, and invited the parents to send their children the next Sunday, and that very Sunday about thirty came. In a very short time I had fifty, and now there are seventy. About that time the curate came to me: 'So, Grace,' says he, 'I hear that you are going to set up a Sunday-school—well, I will give you books.' 'Thank you, sir,' said I, 'a gentleman has promised me books; perhaps you would be so good as to give me benches, for,' said Grace to me, 'I did not know what kind of books he might give me.' 'Oh, very well,' he replied, 'it will be all the same to me—then, I will give you benches.'"

On another occasion I was sitting with Grace Jones, when she mentioned to me a dream which she had dreamed. The dream I forget, but I well remember it was a striking vehicle of Scripture truth, and full of ideas most profitable for edification and comfort. She said to me, "I don't know what to think of it. I don't want to trust to anything but what is written in the Bible."

"Why, Grace," said I, "you are quite right; so let us see

* This was the good Mr. Collins, of Paternoster-row, once the publisher of the tracts of the Religious Tract Society.

what the Bible says." So I took up her Bible, which was lying near me, and turned to Job xxxiii. 14—"God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not: in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men," etc.

She was astonished and delighted, and I was delighted with her demand for Scripture warrant and her contentment with it—such is faith.

A kind clergyman of my acquaintance invited her to his house during the holidays, to give her the benefit of fresh air and nourishing food. He told me afterwards that she was a missionary amongst his servants. "To do good and to communicate" she forgot not. Before I left Linton I made a feeble effort to establish a school in a neglected parish, and I thought that my investigations as to the suitable person amongst the cottagers to conduct the school had been successful; however, to make the matter sure, I consulted Grace Jones. She knew the woman's unfitness, and I heard, when I had left Linton, that Grace had succeeded where I had failed.

And now she rests from a weak and crippled body; from pinching poverty, from toils and anxious cares. Her righteous soul is no more grieved by sin around her. Her spirit no longer groans under the assaults of sin and Satan; she has taken her place amongst kindred spirits in the presence of her Lord and Saviour. She still has a voice which may be heard on earth, and that voice takes up the words of the Holy Ghost, and says, "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Who would not enjoy such a seed-time? for it is present blessedness. Who would not reap such a harvest? for it is a crown of glory.

I am, dear Lady C—,

Sincerely yours,

Uplands, August 29, 1854.

H. G.

THE SERVANTS' SABBATH.

A WORD TO THE MASTER AND MISTRESS OF THE HOUSE.

"Do thyself no harm," is a maxim which reason approves as well as revelation. The law of self-preservation repeats the sentiment. The law also of the Saviour, which is a rule of kindness, teaches a man not to injure another, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them;" this was a golden maxim, given by Him who loves mankind, whose laws they are bound to obey, and who says unto

masters, "Give unto your servants that which is just and equal," Col. iv. 1.

There are many highminded and honourable masters who are incapable of committing an act of injustice towards their servants, who notwithstanding fail to remember that they are all equal in the sight of Him before whom masters and servants will one day appear. What does the law of the sabbath require of masters towards their domestics? It permits deeds of necessity and mercy. It is a violation of that law, when whatever is unnecessary is done. One would imagine, judging from the custom of many, that it is only the master and the family who are intent on going to heaven, and that it is comparatively of no consequence whether or not any of the servants ever reach the heavenly land. Whenever a carriage is used on the sabbath for even a short drive, or for a family in health to go to a place of worship, are not the servants unnecessarily employed? And when on that day company are invited, the domestics so occupied are precluded from attendance at a place of worship. Ye masters—is this just? Ye mistresses—is this equal? Masters and mistresses, is this conduct in accordance with the knowledge that you also have a Master in heaven?

Whilst benevolent endeavours are made to shorten the hours of labour by the early closing of shops, by the giving a portion of Saturday to the young men in large commercial establishments, shall no one plead for the servants that an opportunity be afforded to so useful a class of the community to go to the sanctuary also? Think for one moment of your responsibility. The Lord of the sabbath is the Lord of life and liberty, and wherever his authority is denied, there the curse of slavery is felt. No people can be blest without keeping a holy day, a day sacred to God, the sabbath of the Lord. The repose of the spirit is as necessary as a respite from toil for the body; and to retire from worldly employment to the inner sanctuary is like drawing a fresh supply from the fountain of health and salvation. Each in his sphere has something to do, and happy is he who for Christ's sake does it with all his heart as unto God, and not unto man. There is no steadiness without an aim, and unless the aim be a worthy one the Spirit does not fully nerve the aim. He who has the power of acting should act in such a way as shall do some good to somebody. Let, then, masters and mistresses, seeking the aid of the Holy Spirit, surrender themselves to God through Christ with a true and loving faith; and, depending on Almighty help, strive to

promote the welfare of their servants, especially by enabling them fully to share in God's gracious gift of the sabbath, which emphatically "was made for man."

A Friend to Masters and Servants.

WHAT IS LIFE?

Psalm xvii. 15.

THE child lay down to rest;
His bright eye had no tear;
His glad heart felt no fear,
Not yet by grief distrest:
One little hand still clasped his toy;
His dreams were only dreams of joy

The man lay down to sleep;
Since he had been a child.
Stern grief and anguish wild,
Those thorns, which sin doth keep
Still lurking near each earthly flower
Had pierced his soul with withering power.

Old age lay down to die;
Life's joyous hours were flown.
Labour and sorrow known.
I heard the last faint sigh:
The child, the man, the vet'ran, all
Were shrouded 'neath the fun'ral pall.

Then what is life? A smile,
And then a tear: a breath
Just drawn, and lost in death.
Young for a little while,
We sport on waves which o'er us surge,
Then into age from youth we merge.

Yet *more than this* is life:
From childhood's happy cot,
From manhood's tearful lot,
From age's last death-strife,
All must arise—arise to know
Eternal joy or endless woe.

Then give us grace, O Lord,
Whether we smile or weep,
Or live or die, or keep
Or lose our earthly gourd,
To lay us down in peace with thee,
To wake with joy thy face to see.

E. C.



THE END OF THOSE THINGS.

THE GOTHIC DOOR.

A LONG time elapsed before Mr. Daly was able to pay his nieces another visit, and he found them, not at the gay sea-port town, but at their home, a retired place in the country. Their reception of him was even more affectionate than usual, and he soon had the inexpressible pleasure of knowing that his conversation with them at their last meeting had been the means of leading them, not only to the diligent study of God's word, but, as he humbly hoped, to a saving knowledge of the truth therein revealed. On these subjects of the deepest interest and importance he enjoyed with them, as was his custom, much of that sort of conversation described as that in which

"The old and young mix kindly ;

The young unawed, the old unchilled, in unreserved communion."

Celia and Maria thanked their uncle for the promise which he had exacted from them, assuring him that the performance of it had become pleasanter every day. "The Bible," said Celia, "is a mine of inexhaustible wealth, but we feel that, as yet, we have delved but a very little way into it."

"Far enough to have found the pearl of great price I trust," their uncle answered, "a treasure for which, doubtless, you do not regret to have given up the senseless pleasures of this world; so that I may ask you in the words which you tell me made, on a former occasion, so deep an impression upon your minds, 'What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death,' Rom. vi. 21."

"We are certain of it, sir. But to say nothing of future results, we can bear our testimony that our time passes far more pleasantly, more happily now than when we were so occupied with the things of this life that, alas! God was not in all our thoughts."

"And how *does* your time pass? You gave me an animated detail on this point when last we met. I expect another now which, if not so lively, will, I dare say, please me more."

"I hope so, dear uncle," said Maria, "and if it be more worthy of rational and immortal creatures, it is you, under God, we may thank for it."

They then told him, in the guileless simplicity of youth, that they studied the Scriptures, and other religious books together, striving to increase their knowledge, in which they felt very deficient, and, as they expressed it, seeking to build one another up in their most holy faith. That they now practised music and drawing, not for the purpose of exhibiting these accomplishments to strangers, but for their own entertainment and that of their family; and that, in consequence of having given up expensive dresses, they were now able to deduct from their allowance what contributed to the relief of the poor. They also found great enjoyment in the cultivation of flowers; and were, on the Lord's day, able to attend a place of worship where the truth was preached, which they esteemed a great pleasure and advantage. "So I think," Celia said, "that our dear uncle will not condemn us as on a former occasion. But how is this?" she continued, looking at him. "I see your face wears nearly the same grave expression as when you asked in a voice we can never forget, 'What is the end of those things?'"

"Because the same question has again occurred to my mind, my dear nieces," he replied.

"Ah! uncle, you are jesting now. You surely do not mean to condemn the things which we have enumerated, as inconsistent with our Christian profession."

"Assuredly not, when used as recreations, which the mind

requires. As such I should consider them innocent as they are delightful ; but if brought forward as the employments, the business of a Christian's life, I would certainly feel inclined to inquire, 'What is the end of those things?'

"Please, uncle, explain yourself."

"Willingly, dear ; and the more so as I wish to warn you against an error which, I have reason to fear, is not unusual in the present day. Many, having been led to receive the glorious truth that they are saved from everlasting destruction by the finished work of the Saviour, sit down there with content, as if warranted to say, 'Soul, thou art safe, take thine ease.' Now this is very contrary to the Scriptures, which represent the Christian's life as anything but one of inactive self-indulgence. Examine for yourselves the apostolic injunctions, and you will find a number of them headed with such urgent expressions as—fight—seek—strive—be fervent—indicating that a work is required of you which demands the exercise of all your energies. My children, having, through grace, entered your Master's pleasant vineyard, remember that you are to be 'labourers' there, 'labourers together with him.'"

"But, uncle, is not the whole work of redemption his, and his alone?"

"Undoubtedly, from first to last. There will not be one soul among the multitude of the redeemed who will not give him the glory of it. But it cannot have escaped your observation that the New Testament constantly refers to a future distribution of rewards among the saved, according to deeds done in the flesh."

"We have, of course, observed it, uncle ; and knowing that by grace only are we saved, and that the best must count himself but an unprofitable servant, we cannot well understand it."

"Well, my dears, I will relate to you a circumstance that I witnessed a few years ago, which may, perhaps, help to illustrate what we are talking of. I knew a Christian gentleman, the head of a large mercantile establishment, and who was more like a kind father than a master to those who were fortunate enough to be employed in his service.

"This excellent man had no greater delight than to be surrounded by a host of busy men ; he would go among them, and animate them, chide the idler, and encourage the worker. In walking over his extensive premises or grounds with him, you would have been surprised sometimes to see a lazy labourer all at once stimulated to the greatest exertion by

his master's just saying to him these few words, 'Remember the gothic door.' But when Friday night came you might see a practical comment on this enigmatical text.

"In a certain part of the wall surrounding the grounds was a door called the gothic door, by which the workmen went out at night. On a Friday evening Mr. B. would be found standing by this door, sometimes holding a little basket filled with small packages in paper, sometimes showing an uncommon bulkiness of pocket. As the men passed, he slipped a package into the hand of each, and one would find that he had a present of five shillings, another of three, another of half-a-crown, and so on—each discerning in his gift an estimate of his diligence. In this manner Mr. B. generally distributed a considerable sum every week in gratuitous rewards of exertions to which he was justly entitled, and for which he had already paid the price.* How rejoiced must the diligent workman have felt to find his efforts approved by his beloved master. This approbation, the delight of pleasing one to whom he owed so much, not the reward itself however great an acquisition it might have been, probably being his chief stimulant. You can apply all this to the case in point."

"Yes, uncle; and it is, I fear, too true, that if we look to the end of those things about which we have been engaged since mercifully admitted into the Lord's vineyard, we cannot hope to meet his approbation like the earnest diligent labourers at the gothic door."

Maria uttered these words with an expression of much feeling; and Celia added, "Indeed, I fear so. We have been idle servants, and it is not the first time that I have thought it; but then, uncle, what can we do? This is an inquiry which always followed that thought. I know how useful other young people are who live in places where they can teach in schools, attend charitable associations and collect money for assisting religious institutions; but we are shut out from all those things, which often grieves me."

"Then you are very wrong, Celia," Mr. Daly replied. "The situation in which God has placed you must be the best, and you are desired 'therewith to be content,' Phil. iv. 11. Depend upon it, my dear nieces, that wherever you are, or however you may be circumstanced, you can always find some way of serving your Lord, if you only cherish in your hearts such feelings of holy affection and gratitude for all his goodness as will lead you to ask in sincerity, 'Lord, what wilt thou

* A fact.

have me to do?" In your own family circle—the chief sphere of a woman's duty—you may always promote his cause by letting your conversation and temper be such as to 'adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things,' Tit. ii. 10. And doubtless opportunities will arise of instructing others in those doctrines, always in the quiet, humble, unobtrusive way that is becoming in women professing godliness. Let your hearts dwell, my children, upon the dying love of Jesus until you say,

"And shall I do nothing for one
Who was once such a sufferer for me?"

Whenever you feel indolence, or the pleasures of this life slackening your efforts to do your Master's work, think, dears, of the gothic door, and with renewed diligence be able to declare—

"Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go,
My daily labour to pursue;
Thee, only thee, resolved to know,
In all I think, or speak, or do.

"Thee may I set at my right hand,
Whose eyes my inmost substance see;
And labour on at thy command;
And offer all my works to thee.

"For thee delightfully employ
Whate'er thy bounteous grace hath given;
And run my course with even joy,
And closely walk with thee in heaven."

E. F. G.

THE BANKS OF THE RIVER.

THE dread of death may arise from various causes. It may result from apprehensions as to our eternal happiness. We fear, sometimes, whether our names are written in the Lamb's book of life; whether we have any warrant to look forward to a participation in everlasting joys; and therefore we cannot bear the thought of meeting our Judge face to face, and would fain retard the moment when our everlasting destiny must be fixed. Were we *sure* that there was a mansion prepared for us, and a crown of glory laid up for us in heaven; oh, we should not mind passing through the river of death, even though its waters were deep and tempest-tossed. But how can we be sure?

What saith the Scripture? "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." "I am the living bread which

came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish." "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Rom. viii. 1; John iii. 36; vi. 51; x. 27; xiv. 3.

But precious as these assertions are, they do not exactly relieve our distress. Our fear is not whether true believers are everlastingly saved, but whether we are among their number. We hope we are, but it is so easy to deceive ourselves; we may be mistaken; and how terrible to wake in eternity, and find ourselves excluded from the bliss of the redeemed, beyond the possibility of change; for, what we are then, we must be for ever.

Our dread, then, of death, or rather of the consequences of death, may be traced to the weakness of our faith, or to imperfect views of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It cannot, therefore, be removed until our faith becomes stronger, and our views clearer. We must study the word which God has given us, and ask for the teaching of his Spirit, that we may be enabled to understand and to apply to ourselves the heart-cheering truth, "Christ is all, and in all:" "Ye are complete in him." We must strive to lay aside the reasonings, the prejudices, and the unbelief of our own hearts, and receive with simplicity and thankfulness the full and free promises of our Saviour. As we become better acquainted with that loving Saviour, and understand more perfectly the design of his all-sufficient atonement, our anxious forebodings about the future will gradually pass away, as the gloom of midnight fades before the rising sun, and the God of hope will fill us with all joy and peace in believing.

It will tend to mitigate the alarm with which we regard the solemn change of death, if we look at it in its true character, as a continuation of the present, rather than as the commencement of a new state of existence. Heaven and hell are not so much the reward (using the word in its scriptural sense) of our past life, as the necessary sequence of it. It will be *what* we are, not *where* we are, which will constitute our felicity or our woe; and therefore if we are conscious now that we love the Saviour and trust in him, and follow after holiness; or even that we heartily desire and strive to do this; is it not plain that we have within us the germ of true happiness—a heart that is touched with the love of Christ, and longs for conformity to his likeness? With this principle implanted

in our hearts, how could we be for ever miserable? It is impossible: not only because God will never falsify his own word, nor condemn those who put *their* trust in his Son; but because the elements of lasting peace and joy are already ours. "He that believeth on the Son *hath*—not *shall have*—everlasting life." Meditate on this declaration, dear reader, and take the consolation which it is calculated to impart to all who are placing their reliance upon the atonement of Christ.

But in the contemplation of a dying hour, a tender and affectionate spirit is sometimes deeply affected at the prospect of parting with beloved relatives and friends. There are some, perhaps, to whom we are a solace and a support, who have always been accustomed to lean upon us in their weary march of life, and to look to us for counsel and sympathy; how will they do without us? how can we leave them to struggle on, alone, and sorrowful? Or there are others, for whose salvation we are deeply concerned, and over whose wanderings we often shed bitter tears; how shall we bear to take our farewell—it may be our last farewell—of them? How keen will be the anguish of our dying hour, as we reflect that they are still unchanged, unsaved, and that we dare not cherish the hope of meeting them again!

Oh how painful are the separations of the grave! How hard it is to sever, if only for a few years, the ties which bind us so closely to the *dear* ones around us! Many Christians, *aged* Christians too—for old age does not quench the ardency of the affections—can respond to the touching desire of a youthful disciple of the Saviour, "Oh, mamma! I wish we could all die and go to heaven together." Yet why should you dwell only on the dark side of the picture? it may never be presented to you. Your heavenly Father, in his compassion for your weakness, may spare you the sorrow which you anticipate. You may pass away from this life as in a quiet slumber:—

"Nor bear a single pang at parting;
Nor see the tear of sorrow starting;
Nor hear the quivering lips that bless you;
Nor feel the hands of love that press you."

Or, if not; if fully conscious in your last moments that you are parting from those whom you love, God may so strengthen and animate your dying spirit as that you shall be enabled with calmness, nay with cheerfulness, to resign the objects of your affection to his merciful guidance and protection. You will feel that He who has watched over you so many years in

the wilderness, and brought you safely through every danger, can surely do as much for those whom you are leaving behind; that He who has taught you to pray so earnestly and so perseveringly for their spiritual welfare, will not suffer your prayers to remain unanswered, although he calls you home before you have witnessed their fulfilment. And you will also realize your happy and speedy re-union with your dear friends in another world. Death will not long divide you; the remainder of their appointed time on earth will pass rapidly away as a tale that is told, and then you will meet them again—meet to part no more!

“ With the prospect of meeting for ever,
With the bright gates of heaven in view,
From the dearest on earth we may sever,
And smile a delightful adieu.”

Aged believer, you are standing now on the banks of the river; fear not, only believe. Remember that one of the reasons why Jesus Christ manifested himself in human nature was for the express purpose of dispelling that gloom which naturally overspreads the mind as we look upon the dark waters of death. “Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage,” Heb. ii. 14, 15. Then seek deliverance from that fear, and expect deliverance. Christ suffered not in vain; all the purposes of his death have been fully accomplished; and he would have his people even now to participate in his triumph, and, without waiting for the actual encounter, to join in the ascription of the apostle, “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Then

“ Shudder not to pass the stream,
Venture all thy care on him,
Him whose dying love and power
Still’d its tossing, hushed its roar
Not one object of his care
Ever suffered shipwreck there.
See the haven full in view;
Love Divine shall bear thee through.”

Is it granted to you to possess that strong faith, that calm assurance, which elevates the mind above the fear of death? Can you say with gladness, “The time of my departure is at hand: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a

crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day?" 2 Tim. iv. 6-8. Thank your Saviour for this glorious hope—this hope which is as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast—for he is its author and its bestower. It is because he has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, that you are now enabled to look forward with composure to your conflict with the last foe, and triumphantly to ask, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" 1 Cor. xv. 55. Well may you rejoice, for your life is hid with Christ in God, and you are safe for ever. Safe amidst the infirmities and perils of old age; safe in the swelling waters of Jordan; safe when you stand before the solemn judgment seat; yes, safe throughout eternity. Nothing in earth or hell can separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, or pluck you from the grasp of your ever-living Saviour. He upholds and comforts you now in the evening of life; and "by and by, leaning upon his arm, you shall come down to the river. Not a ripple shall be on its bosom; its clear waters shining in heaven's own light shall allure to the crossing. His feet shall but touch the stream, and, lo, "a way for the ransomed to pass over." "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord;" "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints;" Rev. xiv. 13; Psal. cxvi. 15.

But our remarks about the river of death have been addressed to true Christians; are you, reader, one of their number? If not, you have no right to appropriate to yourself the consolations which are designed only for them. There is no sight more painful than that of an aged individual on the borders of the grave, on the threshold of eternity, unrenewed, unsanctified, and yet undismayed by the terrors of the future, and confident of the joys of heaven. May God preserve us from so fearful a delusion! "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," Gal. vi. 7. A life of carelessness—of worldliness—of self-righteousness, cannot prepare us for a life of glory. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," John iii. 3, 36. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14. A change of heart, faith in Christ, the fruits of holiness, are the precursors of the believer's assurance of eternal felicity; what do you know of them in your own experience? Examine yourself, whether you are in the faith; or whether you have only

a name to live while you are dead. The absence of alarm, or even the possession of joy, as you draw near to death and eternity, is not, of itself, an indication of safety. It may be but the deadly calm before an awful tempest; a fatal slumber on the edge of a frightful precipice. IGNORANCE trembled not when he came to the river-side, and prepared to cross it; he got over it with less difficulty than Christian, for one VAIN HOPE helped him with his boat; but when he reached the other side, the King commanded his servants to bind him hand and foot, and to cast him into outer darkness.

Yet while this should warn the presumptuous and the self-confident, it should not discourage the awakened sinner, who feels that life is receding beneath his tread, and that his feet have as yet found no sure resting-place. The language of the gospel is language of peace to all who really desire salvation from the peril and the dominion of sin. "Come unto me," says the Saviour, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," Matt. xi. 28. It is never too late to turn to him; to seek forgiveness at his cross. God's promises of salvation are made without limitation of time: for whenever a sinner repents of his sins, He has promised to put away his wickedness out of remembrance. They are made without exception of sins; for, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin," 1 John i. 7; and, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men," Matt. xii. 31. They are made without exception of persons; for, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved," Acts ii. 21. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," Rev. xxii. 17. "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," John vi. 37.

Aged reader! "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Look unto him and be saved. How else will you pass through the swellings of Jordan? how else will you stand at the judgment seat of Christ? M.

THE MAN AND HIS TWO MASTERS.

WALKING out one day, I unexpectedly met a respectable man who had formerly lived in the service of my father's family, and stopped to inquire how he was getting on.

"Thank you, sir," said John Mills, "I am still in service, but I can't say that I am quite comfortable or satisfied just now."

"Indeed! I am sorry to hear that. You know, 'a rolling

stone gathers no moss.' I hope you try to bear with your share of the little crosses that burden every lot in life."

"Well, sir, I certainly do try, but I'm just now in doubt about what to do. I would like to tell you, sir, and ask your advice, if you would be so kind as to give it, and not think me presuming too much."

"Not at all. I shall be glad to be useful to you. But, John, are you sure you can fully inform me on both sides of the question?"

"I will try, sir, I assure you." So I strolled with John while he unfolded the difficulties of his position.

"It seemed a very comfortable place, sir; I thought I was very fortunate to have nothing to do but attend on two gentlemen who live in very respectable lodgings; both of them very kind, and one of them very liberal too. After a time, however, I began to feel rather awkward, and saw that a deal of management would be needed; for sometimes one wants me one way, and the other another way, and being anxious to oblige them both, I get nearly run to death. Perhaps you'll understand better, sir, if I tell you two or three things that have happened.

"Mr. A. meets me on the Sunday morning, and as he is going to church himself, he thinks other people ought to do the same I suppose. So he says, 'You are going to public worship, I hope, John. I know of nothing to prevent you.' Then I say, 'Thank you, sir, I hope to go presently.' But in a few minutes Mr. W.'s bell rings, and he says, 'John, have my horse ready at twelve o'clock.' This is just in the middle of service time, so of course I can't go to church.

"But then, thinks I, I can go in the evening, and that will satisfy Mr. A. But as Mr. W. mounts his horse, he says, 'John, you can enjoy yourself this afternoon where you like, but mind you are ready for me about seven this evening.' This settles me again, and when Mr. A. finds it out, he shakes his head and seems grieved. Then he gave me a book, saying, it would occupy my mind while I was waiting or doing nothing, and I meant to read it sure enough, but Mr. W. saw it one day, and laughed at it, and asked if I was going to turn saint, for he did n't like saints. So I keep the book to please Mr. A., but don't read it to please Mr. W.

"These are only trifles, though, compared with what has happened lately. Mr. A. gave me a ticket to attend a temperance meeting, which of course I said I should enjoy very much, and he pressed me particularly to be there. Now, as

ill luck would have it, Mr. W. happened to give me a ticket for the pit of the theatre for the very same evening, and it was quite certain I should enjoy that; but how could I contrive to be at both? At last I resolved to go and have tea with the temperance people, and hear a speech or two, and get away quietly as soon as I could. This answered pretty well. I heard a good many things against drunkenness, and thought there was no need to hear more, for I was n't at all given to drinking to signify; but I clapped with the best of them, and then sneaked out, and ran to the theatre in time for the end of the first piece.

"There I saw some other servants who had been treated by their masters, and somehow or other, we unfortunately got a glass or two together, and they say I was quarrelsome and made a row, but I found my way home at last, and, of course, got scolded by the mistress; but Mr. W. kindly interfered, saying, he guessed how it had happened, and quite forgave me. But it was Mr. A.'s anger I thought most about, specially after the temperance meeting; however, he spoke gently and seriously to me the next morning, and required to know how it happened, but I thought it was no matter if I promised to keep sober in future, and I refused to explain; but I did not choose to break with him, and after apologizing and taking his advice humbly, I got off for this time. I don't expect, however, that things can go on much longer in this way.

"Mr. A. has prayers and reads the Bible every evening and morning, and any of the family and servants who like, go in. I wish to go in, to show proper respect; but Mr. W. is sure to want something at those very times, and his bell often calls me in the middle of a chapter, or prayer, and I find it awkward to know what to do."

"It really is a very awkward predicament, John," said I, after listening attentively to his statement. "It seems, however, that in reality you are more interested in Mr. W. and more attentive to his wishes than to those of Mr. A. Would it not be better, therefore, to give up Mr. A.'s service, and not annoy him and yourself by only half doing your duty towards him?"

"Well, sir, you see Mr. A. is a very respectable man, and to have lived in his service a good while would be a character of itself to any good family. It seems quite proper to stay with him if I can."

"Well, then, why not decline Mr. W., and attach yourself exclusively to him?"

"Ah, but Mr. W. is so generous and kind, he always tries to make up to me for anything that goes cross with Mr. A.; and when I take a carriage for him to any of his parties, I always get well treated in the servants' hall. I should never have any pleasure like that with Mr. A.; besides, he never interferes with me as Mr. W. does, making me feel uncomfortable and dissatisfied with myself."

"I am afraid you will not like my advice, John, but a thought strikes me that may help to guide you. Suppose you were ill, or met with some accident which disabled you for life, which of these gentlemen would be most likely to prove a real friend to you, to visit, and comfort, and provide for you?"

"Ah, that's easily guessed! Mr. A. is the gentleman to do a thing like that. But it is not at all likely to happen, sir."

"You do not know. On the contrary, I think it is very likely to happen, nay, it surely will, if you allow yourself to be misled by every new temptation. Then you will grow old if you live, and will want a friend then, if you think yourself so independent now. Mr. W.'s regard for you will cease just when you require it most. John Mills, you are not the sensible man I supposed, if you do not decide for the master who would stand by you through sickness, privation, or sorrow. I hope to hear that you have chosen the one and forsaken the other, for it is the only way to be comfortable and satisfied with your master, yourself, and your place."

What a picture of human nature, thought I, as John, somewhat disconcerted, went his way, and type of the majority in every rank of life, trying to reconcile the service of two masters, and principles as opposite as light and darkness—an amalgamation on which He who knew the demands of both, and the nature of man, stamped the verdict of impossibility, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon!" But we will try, says the "perverse generation;" we have a taste for the pleasures and enjoyments of the world. We do not want to do any harm; on the contrary, we like to be thought well of by all parties, and we certainly intend to go to heaven at last. Therefore, we will serve God when a pleasant opportunity occurs; we will give alms, say our prayers, forward all charitable schemes for benefiting our fellow-creatures—all this is respectable and easy. As for the world, it is so cheerful and pleasant, it amuses us, it flatters us, it passes our time, and it does not interfere with our self-complacency; it makes no enemies, it is full of agreeable, talented, talkative friends. The pity is

that we cannot keep it for ever, else we should throw ourselves unreservedly into its arms without regard to any other claimant.

But conscience, troublesome meddler! insists now and then on suggesting a thought like that proposed to poor John Mills. Is it God or the world who befriends old age, gives patience to the sick and suffering, comforts the afflicted and the mourner, whispers of hope and glory to the dying, who have sought and served their Master in his own appointed way? But an answer to conscience is ready. "When we are old, or poor, or sick, or sorrowful, then we will give up the world and close with God. At present we will give him a Sunday thought, and a coin or two for his cause, and shake hands with the world over our stifled conscience."

And so the "many" rush on by the "broad way and the wide gate," regardless of the voice of pitying, remonstrant love that calls from the narrow way and the strait gate, saying, "Here is eternal pleasantness, this is the path of peace." "Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as light excelleth darkness," that while all earthly pleasures, possessions, and promises end in disappointment, and are "vanity and vexation of spirit," "whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever;" it is he who says to old age, "Even to hoar hairs will I carry you." "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Faithful is He who calleth by Christ Jesus to present peace and future glory. Blessed are they who through grace obey the calling, and choose "the better part" which shall not be taken from them. B. T.

THE LAST DAY OF THE YEAR.

It was the night of the 31st of December, and a bitter north wind blew, with occasional showers of hail that beat against the window panes as if they would break them to pieces; but the cold was unfelt and the "pelting storm" unheeded in the comfortable drawing-room where Mr. Mason and his family had assembled round the fire. "In two hours more," said Mr. Mason, looking at his watch, "this year will have passed away for ever, with all its cares and with all its pleasures. How many mercies have we received during its course! and now, at the end of it, to see our beloved Charles (glancing towards his eldest son) again included in the home circle, is

indeed cause for great thankfulness." A general murmur of assent proved that every heart there responded to the sentiment. "It is ten o'clock," he continued, "and time for some of our little party to retire."

The younger children rose to depart, and one of them said, "Papa, you must not forget to give us a text, to talk of and think of till we go to sleep, and to repeat for you to-morrow morning."

"Certainly, my dear; and I do not know one more appropriate than part of a verse in the psalm we have just read. 'We spend our years as a tale that is told,' " *Psa. xc. 9.*

When the children were gone, those who remained narrowed the circle by drawing closer to the fire, except Charles, the eldest son, who had left his seat, and was walking up and down the room in silence.

"Father," said Henry, the second son, who was an university student, "there really is something quite poetical—quite touching in the verse you have repeated. This is, I suppose, a slight instance of the literary excellences of the Bible, which, I have often heard you say, were many."

"Yes," Mr. Mason replied, "it is a subject I have pleasure in dwelling upon, because I think it one of the proofs of our heavenly Father's tender love for man, that he did not make our guide and oracle, the Bible, a mere lesson-book of duty. It has been well observed, that God knew few would ever ask, 'What must I do to be saved?' till they came in contact with the Bible itself; and, therefore, he made the Bible not only an instructive book, but an attractive one—not only true, but enticing. Concerning the words in question which you pronounce to be poetical and touching, Henry, and which are generally considered striking, this is, I think, chiefly owing to the simplicity and conciseness with which they convey an important truth that every heart must feel, namely, the rapidity with which the portion of time allotted us to prepare for eternity is passing away; and also what every heart perhaps must more or less acknowledge—the waste of many a precious hour, day, and month, until we bring the whole unprofitable year to an end, even as a tale that is told."

"Well, father," replied Henry, "such may be the case with most people, for idleness is a common vice; but I am certain you rejoice that no feeling of this kind can have occasioned the sensation which, though I cannot define it, I certainly experienced just now in hearing these simple scriptural words. You know I have attended closely to my studies for

the last year. Neither can such compunction form a part of the meditation in which Charles seems to be indulging as he paces up and down the carpet, for he, too, has been doing all he could to get on in his profession, and bids fair to earn the laurel wreath before long."

"I do rejoice, Henry, that my sons are likely to succeed, each in the vocation which he has chosen. Diligence in our calling is commendable; but believe me something more is necessary to make a retrospective view of past days quite pleasant."

"What is that, father?"

"The testimony of the conscience that we have been making some endeavour to fulfil the end for which we were created; without this, be our efforts ever so successful in trying to attain to worldly honours, riches, or any other of those things that perish in the using, we shall have a secret consciousness that our time has not been spent to the purpose for which it was intended."

"And, father," Henry inquired, "what would you say is the chief end for which man was made?"

"I would say, my son, that the purpose which he is fitted to answer, the thing which God had principally in view in bringing man into existence was, that he might glorify God. This truth is taught in Scripture. 'Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God,' 1 Cor. x. 31. And after the royal sage had proved the vanity of all other things under the sun, he sums all up in these remarkable words, 'Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man,' Eccles. xii. 13. The word duty in our version is an interpolation, and able commentators are of opinion that the passage means 'this is the whole end or purpose of man's life.'"

Mr. Mason's daughter here interposed a question, "And how, papa, would you say that sinful creatures such as we are can glorify our Maker?"

"God is glorified by the faith, trust, love, and obedience of his creatures, and especially by their believing acceptance of his mercy in Christ. 'God is love;' or, in other words, benevolence is the sum of his character, and distinguishing glory of his nature. In the gift of his Son, as revealed in the gospel, this attribute is displayed so as to glorify him to all created intelligences; and when we on whom that gift was bestowed are indifferent to it, when it is not our chief object

to glorify Him who bestowed it, we are not living for the end for which we were created, and a sober retrospect of our lives cannot furnish us with comfort in the past, or hope in the future. No, conscience will still whisper, that the time is mis-spent in which we have not been seeking, and seeking *first*, the kingdom of God and his righteousness. You have, dear Henry, been studious since your sojourn at college, and success has increased

“The fever of renown

Sprung from the strong contagion of the gown.”

But, desirable as science and literature are, an immortal mind cannot be satisfied in the pursuit of them; it feels that it was created for even a higher purpose. And was it not some consciousness of this that awakened what you call the ‘undefined feeling’ on hearing the emphatic words, ‘We spend our years as a tale that is told?’”

The young student looked grave, but did not reply, and Charles, resuming his seat in the family circle, said, “You are right, father; I am sure of it. However deeply we may be immersed in the pursuits of this life, there are moments in which the heart tells us they are but vanity, and that one thing is needful. Oh! how happy are they who attend to this admonitory voice before it is too late.”

“It is never too late while life is spared, my dear son,” said his mother, observing an expression of melancholy which had stolen over his countenance. “I have been watching you for the last half hour; serious thoughts have evidently been passing in your mind; will you not tell us what they are?”

“Yes, mother, they were awakened by that same text. It was a singular coincidence my father’s mentioning it, and I assure you it seemed to pierce my heart.”

“The word of God,” said Mr. Mason, “is truly sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. Tell us, Charles, this new instance of its power.”

“Willingly, dear father; I cannot have a thought that I would hide from any one here. You all probably remember my often mentioning in my letters my messmate Shipton, who was in the same vessel with me from the first day I went to sea, and whose steady friendship for me was manifested on various occasions. He had distinguished himself in his profession, and to his advice I was indebted for whatever approbation my conduct may have met with, and for any hope I may have of earning the laurel wreath, as Henry calls it. Poor

Shipton, his prospects were brighter than mine, but in a moment they were blighted for ever. We were cruising among some islands in the Pacific, and a party of us set out in a boat to visit a volcano which is on one of them, the smoke and flames of which were visible at a great distance. The wind got up high before we reached the shore, and a tremendous surf beat upon the rugged coral beach. As we saw the natives paddling through it in their canoes with impunity, we persevered in trying to land; but our boat was driven up against a rock and upset. The natives soon came to our aid, and got us all on shore uninjured except Shipton. He had got pressed between the rock and boat; one arm was smashed, and, what was worse, his chest was hurt. He was conveyed to the cabin of a native chief, where I remained to take care of him, while our companions returned to the ship to send the doctor, and whatever else might be deemed necessary to his assistance. Alas! it was soon evident that medical aid was vain; we had only to try and assuage his sufferings and make him as comfortable as we could while he remained with us, in which the kind and hospitable natives helped us. Some of them could speak a few words of English.

"When the case was known to be hopeless, the chief who was our host came to me as I sat beside the mats on which my poor friend had been lying so quietly for some time that I thought he was asleep, and said in a low voice, 'I'm sorry stranger must die; but where will he go? Will he go to Jesus?' I made a sign to him to be silent, but the dying man started and said, 'Where shall I go? Ah! that is the question. Nothing else is important now. How vain, how insignificant seem all that I have been living for—honour, promotion! Were I made an admiral what would it avail now? What madness to live as if we were never to die!' 'Jesus take away sting from death,' said the poor Indian in a tone of deep compassion. 'I send for good missionary to tell you about Jesus,' and he went to execute his benevolent purpose. 'Mason, you were taught these things when you were young,' said my friend; 'can you not help me now?' Oh, my dear parents, my brother, and sisters, how bitterly did I feel at that moment that I had sinned against light and knowledge, and that my heart and life had been uninfluenced by the truths I had learned! I could only repeat for him such portions of Scripture as remained in my memory. John iii. 16, he made me say over and over, but he spoke no more, and died about an hour after the good missionary had arrived. He

was buried late in the evening in a grove of cocoa-nut trees, and most of our crew attended, for Mr. Shipton was greatly liked. It was an impressive scene, lighted by the glare of the volcano, which, two days before, the poor fellow had come on shore to visit.

"The missionary, an American minister who had long resided in the island, and been most useful to the natives, preached a sermon over the grave from these very words: 'We spend our years as a tale that is told.' Under any circumstances that discourse was calculated to go to the heart, peculiarly so under those which I have described. I thought it went to mine, for I felt deeply the folly of my inattention to the only thing of real importance, and that truly my life was 'even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away,' and I resolved on a far different course for the future. My conduct was, for a time, influenced by these resolutions; but by degrees they faded away, and I was again living wholly for the things of this world, and neglectful of the purpose of my being, though often with an uneasy mind. You can all now understand how my father's repeating these words, suddenly and powerfully recalled to my mind the solemn scene in that lonely distant island; but none of you can know the bitter regret with which I look back to time which might have been spent to the glory of my Maker and good of my fellow-creatures, and has been thanklessly wasted in what is altogether vanity."

A long silence followed this recital, which was at length broken by Mr. Mason, who said, "Your affecting little story, my dear son, is a good comment upon the text that has so much engaged our attention this evening. May it sink deep into all our hearts, and, under the Divine blessing, be the means of preserving us from the ruinous habit of forgetting that the present moment alone is ours, for we know not what shall be on the morrow. 'To-day, while it is called to-day'—*now*, my children—'*now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation,' 2 Cor. vi. 2. Oh! may our hearts decide, in reliance on the Holy Spirit's help, henceforth to fulfil the design of our creation by seeking to glorify that God who has not only made but redeemed us by the precious blood of Christ.

G.

A DISTRICT VISITOR'S NOTE-BOOK.

It was a stormy winter's morning; a heavy snow had come down the day before, and a bleak north wind now sent it

drifting over the pathway, or caused it to fall in large flakes from every over-hanging bough. It was the morning for visiting my district; but as I looked out into the garden, and saw the white world, so beautiful, yet so dreary and uninviting, our own cheerful fire-side seemed to glow more brightly, and a recollection of various home duties came to strengthen the temptation for once to remain within. I hesitated—I almost yielded: yet there was really nothing in the weather to deter a person of active habits and in perfect health; and after bringing to my aid some of those trite maxims against delay and self-indulgence which one is so continually needing, and then thinking for a moment more seriously of the motives which had led me to take upon myself this voluntary duty, I staid no longer to parley with inclination, but set off with quick footsteps and a light heart, to encounter the cutting wind and make my way as I could amidst the snow.

My first visit was to an aged, simple-hearted Christian, whom years of suffering had confined to one small room in a noisy, narrow street, where the cheerful sunshine could seldom penetrate, and the shrill voices of children too often forbade all hope of rest. Yet rest was there—the rest and peace of the soul, if the calm expression of that countenance might be trusted, as the poor woman lay on her humble pallet, “the pain and cough still very bad,” she said, yet “better than yesterday.” She was one of that happy few who know how to make the best of everything; and the secret of her wisdom was the faith which enabled her to receive all things from a Father’s hand. It was good for me to read to her one of those chapters at the close of the Revelation, which tell of the glorious city into which shall enter all whose names are “written in the Lamb’s book of life;” and then we spoke together for a little while of the love which had obtained for us this blessed hope, by the shedding of the Saviour’s most precious blood. She could not read; and she understood but little beyond the saving truth which the Holy Spirit himself had taught her, that Christ had died to take away her sins; yet so childlike and earnest was her reliance upon him, so unquestioning her reception of his promises, that I often found myself a learner by her bedside, and felt that she was far wiser and happier than she knew.

I went next to the cottage of a labouring man, whose wife was just recovering from illness. She was poor and in distress herself, yet not so selfishly absorbed in her own cares as to have no concern for those of a poor neighbour, Mrs. Barrett,

whose little child I recognised playing about the room, because there was neither fire nor food for him at home. His father and mother, I was told, had spent the whole of the previous day—God's hallowed day, which brings blessings, spiritual and temporal, to so many—beside their cheerless hearth without so much as a morsel of bread: for the severe frost had thrown the poor man out of work, and frequent sickness had prevented them from laying up any store for the evil day.

I had frequently observed Mrs. Barrett with much interest, having remarked in her manner and mode of expression something that told of early training and habits of thought not common amongst her class. I entered her cottage, therefore, prepared to sympathize in her trouble, and only regretting that the help I could offer was so inadequate to her wants.

I found her alone, busied in giving to her little room the appearance of cleanliness and order, if not of comfort. Her husband was gone out to try if he could earn a few pence by sweeping away the snow. He had left his home cold and hungry, she said, but she hoped he would surely gain enough to bring back a loaf of bread. And then, worn out with grief and privation, she covered her face with her apron, and sobbed as if her heart were breaking.

I sat down beside her and tried to comfort her, but for a long time nothing that I could say availed. Yet the reality of my compassion made its way to her heart, and by degrees she began to speak to me with less reserve than she had ever done before. She made some allusion to her early years, and I found that she had been brought up respectably, and carefully instructed. The recollection of her childhood seemed to overpower her afresh, and bitter must have been the tears which flowed down her flushed though sunken cheek. She was still young, and, retaining the traces of much personal beauty, it required no great effort of the imagination to picture her a light-hearted girl, with bright eyes and a beaming face, hastening to school. I thought it might be well, while her memory was reverting to her youthful days, to recall to her the lessons of that by-gone, happy time.

"Do not forget," said I, "who it is that sends to us all afflictions of one kind or other, and let us ask ourselves why they are sent. It is to bring our sinful hearts to God. There is a verse of the Bible which you perhaps learned at school, 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.'"

"Yes, ma'am," said she, looking up, "I did learn that verse,

and often have I thought of it, but it is impossible that God can love me. My husband often says it seems as if we were to have nothing but misfortune. If he gets a little work, the child is sure to be ill—and we have buried two—or else I am laid up, as I was when you first came to see us. As I tell him, God's blessing is not with us, and we cannot expect it."

"But if you have not his blessing, it must be because you do not ask it. You know, Mrs. Barrett, God has promised—"

"Oh ma'am," she cried, "don't speak so to me. I can't ask for God's blessing." She went on to tell me circumstances in her history and position, which it is not necessary to repeat, but which involved great criminality. It is enough to say, that she manifested great penitence and self-humiliation.

We talked together long and earnestly. My aim was to lead her to cast her burden on the Saviour, and thenceforward to live a life of holiness to his praise.

When I listened, no long time afterwards, to the thanks and blessings of this poor woman; when she told me of the hope she felt of pardon through Christ in the way of faith and holiness, I remembered that bleak winter morning, and the selfish wish to defer the duty of the day which had so nearly conquered. It was only in the moment of extreme sorrow and depression that the heavy laden heart would have unfolded its secret grief: how thankful, then, was I, that I had been strengthened against temptation, and, under God's providence, had been the means of lightening her load of earthly care, and, as I hoped, of leading her sinful soul to Him who alone can take away guilt, and give enduring rest.

But this was not the only incitement to perseverance and occasional self-denial which I received that day. In the same house with Martin, the blind basket-maker, there was living a young couple, poor, but industrious and respectable, with an only child, a fair and delicate boy of ten months old. As I turned the corner from Mrs. Barrett's, intending to pay my usual visit to blind Martin, I saw the curtain drawn over the window, and the green shutter half closed; and immediately I recollected that the baby had seemed pale and fretful the week before, though not so ill as to occasion his parents any deep anxiety. But when I entered, the stillness of the little room, the absence of the infant, and above all, the young mother's tearful face, told me that death had been there. Little George, I found, had been ill but a few short hours, and then all was over.

"I am so glad you came to-day," said the bereaved mother, in tones of quiet grief. "They say we must bury him to-

morrow; but he is not at all changed, and I thought you would like to see him once again."

If you, reader, have ever remarked the sorrowful gratification which it affords the poor to look with them upon the cold, lifeless form of a husband, a parent, or a child, you will understand the feeling which prompted the mother's wish. I received it as a token that I was regarded as a friend; and it gave more warmth and earnestness to the word of consolation which I offered to her, as we stood together by the little coffin, and gazed on the calm, sweet face in its deep repose. It was a moment, also, for gently, but faithfully, admonishing the mourner of the coming hour of death, and the day of judgment, which are so often forgotten amidst our present interests, griefs, and joys. She was of a thoughtful and serious character; and that brief conversation, under such circumstances, was calculated to increase the feeling of mutual good will, and, I would hope, to deepen in both our hearts the solemn warning that "in the midst of life we are in death."

I next ascended the dark and narrow staircase leading to the room occupied by the basket-maker and his wife. The moment I tapped at the door, the old man's voice reached me in cheerful tones of welcome, "Walk in, ma'am, if you please;" and when I entered, I found Mrs. Martin at her needle, and her husband seated by the fire, in evident expectation of my coming. A few preliminary remarks about the weather led to their unconsciously administering the crowning reproof of my contemplated self-indulgence. Early as it was in the day, they had already been to a village two miles distant to take home some work; breakfasting sooner than usual, and hurrying there and back, that they might not miss my visit. I need not tell you, reader, what thoughts of joy and gratitude, what resolutions for the future, this circumstance, apparently so trivial, awakened in my mind.

I still retain a pleasant recollection of this morning's reading and conversation. Our chapter was the sixteenth of John; and I remember how we paused over the Saviour's words, "Your joy no man taketh from you." I still seem to see the look of deep interest in the blind man's face, when I told him how continually, in suffering and sorrow, even to this day, the people of Christ find this promise fulfilled. I told him of the martyrs hundreds of years ago; and of believers in our own times, who endured imprisonment and exile because they would not give up the Bible. I tried to explain to him that the love of God and the consolations of his Spirit filled their hearts

with joy and peace even in the extremity of their outward affliction; and that he understood something of my meaning, his serious countenance and intelligent observations plainly showed. May he learn the lesson by happy experience from that Divine Teacher who alone can give the spiritual mind to discern, and the penitent heart to receive, the gospel of the kingdom!

E. W.

OUR HOME!

LIFE'S sun a longer shadow throws,
And all things whisper of repose;
Our toilsome journey soon will close,
And we shall reach our home.

Here we no resting-place have found;
Unnumbered dangers lurk around,
Temptations, snares, and griefs abound—
Earth cannot be our home.

On let us press with cheerful haste,
Nor precious moments idly waste;
For, oh! we long those joys to taste,
Which are reserved at home.

Only a narrow stream doth flow
Between this dreary waste of woe,
And that fair land where richly grow
The lovely flowers of home.

Its peaceful waters softly glide,
And Christ through them our steps will guide,
And land us on the other side
Where we shall be at home.

Some cherished friends have gone before,
Their conflicts and their toils are o'er;
And we shall meet to part no more,
When we have gained our home.

Their songs of welcome sweet and clear
Will soon be falling on our ear,
For we are drawing very near
Unto our happy home.

No clouds of sorrow gather there;
Hushed is the latest thought of care;
Perpetual joys those loved ones share
Within our Father's home.

Life's sun a longer shadow throws,
And all things whisper of repose;
Our toilsome journey soon will close,
And we shall reach our home.

A. M.

